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BY

EYRE EVANS CROWE.

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THE

HISTORY OF FRANCE.

CHAPTER I.

GAUL was reduced by Cæsar under subjection to the Romans about fifty years previous to the birth of Christ. The country remained for the space of five centuries under their sway, troubled, nevertheless, during the latter half of the period by the incursions, conflicts, and finally by the settlement, of barbarian invaders. Under its first conquerors Gaul made rapid progress in improvement. It received the advantages of political union, of an enlightened system of justice, of a long interval of peace; and wealth, industry, agriculture, and commerce soon followed as necessary consequences. The very climate was wonderfully ameliorated, and the soil rendered capable of producing and maturing those choice fruits which the Romans introduced. The vine, the olive, even the useful plant of flax, were brought thither from the south. The Christian religion, too, was amongst the boons, which Rome gave to her subject lands in return for their political independence: nor can the conquests of that ambitious city be said to have been, on the whole, destructive of liberty; since by her were sown those precious seeds of municipal union and rights which were never altogether stifled, and which sprang up after the long winter of the dark ages, to offer the earliest buddings of civilisation, and to bear the first fruits of modern freedom.

Of the natural and well-known boundaries of the Roman province of Gaul, the Rhine was the most important. It was the great barrier which defended the empire from the errant tribes and nations that swarmed beyond. Wealth and civilisation were on one side of the stream; want and barbarism upon the other. Betwixt such neighbours the natural state is war. The disciplined legions of Rome, however, quelled the turbulence of the German tribes, penetrated far and at different intervals into their country, fully avenged one or two defeats, and long held their rude enemies in salutary awe.

The Germans, though little versed in policy, began after some time to perceive that their frequent defeats were in a great measure owing to their disunion, to their dispersion in different tribes, and to the want of any solid or lasting bond of connection, whilst they were opposed by the united mind and forces of a large empire. The mutual leagues hitherto formed amongst the barbarians were not sufficiently knit and woven together. The consciousness of this defect produced in the third century those confederacies, in which many tribes united, not occasionally but lastingly, under one common name, and often under one monarch or chief. Some assumed the appellation of Allemanni, or All-Men; others, the simpler distinction of Franks, that is, Brave or Free Men.

The chief seat of the confederacy of the Franks was that marshy territory, overflowed and divided into islets by the Rhine, from the spot where the river commences to turn westward, to its junction with the sea. The first mention of them by the historians of the empire takes place A. D. 241. In nearly forty years after, Probus quelled one of their incursions, and drove them back into their morasses. The civil war betwixt Magnentius and Constantius, which occupied and wasted the Roman forces in mutual slaughter, allowed both Franks and Allemanni to establish their desolate rule on the left bank of the Rhine. The emperor Julian defeated and sub-

dued them, drove the Allemanni within their ancient bounds, but allowed the Franks to settle permanently on the Roman side of the Rhine, in the province of Toxandria, supposed to be the modern Brabant.

The commencement of the fifth century is marked by the great and victorious irruption of all the barbarian hosts into Gaul. They poured, like a long pent up and gathering tide, in a thousand destructive torrents throughout the land, sweeping away and overwhelming in a mass, life, property, and institutions. Were it not for the Christian church, which held itself aloft and alive above the general inundation, the very memory and precious traditions of the past would have perished amidst the universal ruin. Years elapsed, ere the agitation subsided and the inebriety of conquest was over. When calm was restored, the Visigoths were in possession of Aquitaine and the lands southward of the Loire, with Toulouse for their capital. The Burgundians held the provinces bordering on the Rhone, from the lake of Geneva to the Mediterranean. Brittany had established a kind of independence. The Franks, who had looked on themselves as the allies more than as the enemies of Roman power, and who had at first bravely stood forth in its defence, had advanced their establishments over the present Netherlands to the limits of modern France; whilst the central provinces, preserved to the empire by the victories of Ætius, were, like Britain, gradually abandoned to themselves, and came to obey, under Roman forms and titles, the wealthiest and most powerful of the native provincials. It was thus that count Ægidius, and after him his son Syagrius, governed, and were even said to have *reigned* at Soissons.

It is singular to observe that, of all the nations which over-ran Gaul, that which eventually subdued the rest, and gave its name both to the land and to the general race, was the least united, and the least advanced in the arts of life and policy. Both the Goths and the Burgundians were more civilised than the Franks. Each of the former was a nation, forming one race, and obey-

ing one monarch and family of monarchs. The Franks, on the contrary, were but a looser kind of confederacy, which held together still less as they advanced from the Rhine. Each town or territory had its petty and independent sovereign; and previous to Clovis, we meet with no sign of supreme chief or capital town amongst them. This, no doubt, was advantageous to them. They were thus more free to emigrate and to invade. It left the throne of chieftaincy open to the first leader of pre-eminent talents; whilst the vagueness and comprehensiveness of their name was calculated to congregate and admit beneath their banner any roving bands, or even whole nations, of barbarians that might be in search of plunder or establishments.

Such is the secret of the rise of Clovis, the founder of the French monarchy. He was the young chief or king of a small colony of the Franks established at Tournay. In conjunction with the Frank chief of Cambray, he attacked Syagrius, the provincial governor of the Soissonnois, defeated him, and took possession of his territory and capital. (A. D. 485.) It was on this occasion the circumstance took place, so often narrated and alluded to as a proof of the piety of the king, and the independent habits of the barbarians. A silver vase, reserved for sacred uses, had been taken, amidst other plunder, from the church of Rheims. It was at Soissons that the distribution of booty was to take place. Thither came Saint Remy, bishop of Rheims, supplicating for the restoration of the silver vase. Clovis was favourable to the bishop's request, and sought to gratify it. He addressed his assembled soldiers, and begged of them, in addition to his share, to grant him the vase in question. Ere the assembly could answer, a cholerous soldier, jealous of his rights, struck the vase with his axe, exclaiming that the king had no right to more than fell to his allotment. Despite the rudeness of the act, it was still consonant to the habits and laws of the free barbarians. Clovis was obliged to dissemble his resentment, and defer his vengeance. It was not until several months after, that, at a

review, he took an opportunity to find fault with the breaker of the vase for the bad condition of his arms. Clovis flung the soldier's axe to the ground, and whilst the latter stooped to pick up the weapon, the monarch slew him with a blow of his own, exclaiming, "Thus didst thou serve the vase of Soissons!"

Clovis, like all the heroes and eminent men of those ages, paid great respect to the church, and received considerable advantage from its aid. The Franks had been hitherto heathens; but Clovis, having married Clotilda, a Burgundian princess, became instructed in the rites and religion of the Christians. In the heat of a battle against the Germans in the neighbourhood of Cologne, Clovis recalled the example of Constantine, who in a doubtful moment of action invoked the God of the Christians, and was heard. The king of the Franks imitated the example of the Roman, prayed for victory to the God of Clotilda and of Constantine, won it soon after, and was baptized, with the greater number of his followers, in grateful acknowledgment of the divine aid. Clovis had the good fortune to imbibe Christianity at its pure source. The Visigoth and Burgundian monarchs, though Christian, were Arians at this time. Clovis received the orthodox faith, which brought to him the zealous support of the Gaulish clergy, and gave to him the title of *Most Christian King*, worn by his successors to the present day.

The comparison between Clovis and Constantine might be followed farther. Their embracing of Christianity had a similar effect upon both. Instead of tempering their passions, and inspiring them with the virtues of mildness and mercy, it seems to have rather given rein to their ferocity and blood-thirstiness. The domestic murders committed by Constantine, that of his wife, and of his son, are known. To assassination Clovis united perfidy. All the rival monarchs or chieftains whom he could conquer or entrap were sacrificed to his jealousy and ambition. The whole race of a rival family was extirpated, in some instances, by the hand of Clovis him-

self. How could Christianity be made conducive to such crimes? By being coupled with the corrupt doctrine of personal confession and absolution, which, by superseding the voice of conscience, took away all natural obstacles to crime, and held forth, in a barbarous age, the certain prospect of impunity.

Although Clovis won a great battle over the Visigoths in Aquitaine, and obtained a nominal dominion over a portion of that province, nevertheless, his kingdom cannot be said to have really extended beyond the Loire. His system, though favourable to conquest, was by no means so to extended sway. Whilst the Gothic and Burgundian chiefs dispersed, and settled on the soil, a considerable portion of which they forced from the native proprietor, the Franks remained in a warlike body, a kind of standing army, about their king. Even if they did scatter and divide, for the greater convenience of pasturage and provision, into winter quarters, in spring they never failed to re-assemble in their *Champ de Mars;* a kind of half parliament, half review, at first used for discussing and arranging plans of conquest. But in time, as the inferior order of warriors ceased to attend and the prelates appeared there in greater numbers and influence, the national assembly gradually came to exercise judicial and legislative functions, to elect sovereigns and officers, and to sanction laws.

Clovis reigned until the year 511. He had first fixed his residence at Soissons, and was crowned in the cathedral of Rheims. About the middle of his reign he transferred the seat of sovereignty to Paris. Its central situation and security, owing to its being surrounded by the Seine, proved the wisdom of the choice. Clovis ended his days in his new capital, and was buried in the church of St. Génévève, its patron saint, so honoured for having defended it successfully by her prayers against the menaces of Attila.

The descendants of Clovis, or the Merovingians, as they are called from Merovée their supposed founder, reigned over the Franks for nearly two centuries and

a half. That long period occupies but a brief space in history: its annals offer but a succession of barbarism and crime. From Clovis to Charles Martel, the grandfather of Charlemagne, there existed not a personage worthy of the reader's attention or memory; there is not recorded an event or anecdote which could excite any feeling save disgust.

Nevertheless, if we were to esteem a nation by its conquests and extent, the empire of the Franks would command our highest consideration. The sons of Clovis subdued Burgundy and Aquitaine, and extended their dominions, with the exception of a small province round Narbonne retained by the Visigoths, to the Pyrenees and the Mediterranean in the south, whilst Switzerland, Bavaria, Saxony, and the German nations as far as the Baltic and the Elbe, acknowledged their authority towards the north. This large empire divided itself naturally into two great portions; Austrasia to the east, Neustria to the west: the former clinging to German habits, language, and independence; the latter, adopting the tongue and manners of the Romanized Gauls, made great advances in civilisation, whilst it at the same time retrograded, and fell behind its Austrasian neighbour in martial spirit, and consequently in political influence and power. The wars, which never ceased to harass France during the reigns of the Merovingians, were kept up principally by the rivalry betwixt these two portions of the empire. In the struggle which preceded and produced the establishment of the race of Charlemagne, the Latin or western portion of France may be considered to have been reconquered by the Germans or Austrasians; and thus a fresh infusion of the ruder spirit of the Transrhenane race came to invigorate the already degenerated Franks of Gaul.

The race of Clovis became effete from gross licentiousness, and was thinned by mutual slaughter. As is the case with the Turks of the present day, the first act of a monarch was to put to death his brothers, uncles,

and nephews. Consanguinity, instead of being a bond of attachment, was the cause of a deadly and always fatal enmity. Such a succession of murders naturally produced the reigns of kings under age. Monarchs or monarchs' sons could not long escape the sword of the assassin: whilst to intrust an infant king to the care of one of his own race, or of royal blood, even if such survived, was to deliver him to certain destruction. Hence came the necessity of electing regents amongst the Frank chiefs. The office fell to the only magistrate or minister existing in that rude state of society. This was the *mord-dom*, or *major domus*, as it is rendered in Latin, who was at once a royal judge and a kind of steward of the household. At one time appointed by the king, at another chosen by the aristocracy, the *major domus*, or mayor of the palace, soon became more formidable than the monarch himself. And when, during a long minority, he had legally exercised the royal functions, the mayor found it not difficult to prolong his power by reducing his ward and sovereign to imbecility, through physical indulgence and the absence of education, as well as by other obvious arts calculated to strengthen his own personal influence. The family of Pepin succeeded in rendering the office hereditary in their race, and long wielded the power, without assuming the name and honours, of royalty. These belonged to the *race chevelue*, the long-haired race, as the descendants of Clovis were called, from the custom of never cutting the locks of the young princes. In the year 752, Pepin at length threw off the mask, dethroned Childeric III., the *roi fainéant* or mock king of the moment, and the last of the Merovingians, and caused himself to be crowned in the presence of the assembled nation. As his right, Pepin pleaded the long possession of all the realities of regal power in his family: to this he added the free election of his countrymen; but, above all, he relied upon a bull issued by pope Zachary, which declared him the legitimate monarch of the Franks. It was upon this occasion that the popes first assumed that usurped right, which

they afterwards so used and abused, of throning and dethroning kings.

Previous to entering upon the reign of Charlemagne,—that great epoch from whence modern history dates,— it is advisable to take a brief view of that new state of society, then in its infant growth, which, in the prodigious development that ourselves and our fathers have witnessed, so differed from, and so surpassed, that of all preceding ages. We shall thus afford the reader a clew which may guide him through the perplexed mazes of fact and event—give him a scale by which he can mark the progress of society—and make him acquainted with those hidden springs of action, which can be observed in masses of men as well as in individuals.

Four chief powers will be found, on examination, to influence and divide political society,—the kingly, the sacerdotal, the aristocratic, and the democratic. The necessary limits of this work will not allow space to prove the justice and accuracy of this division, or to explain the foundation of its principles in human nature. In the records of antiquity we can never find the example of a state in which these powers were all and separately developed. In very remote times, the regal and sacerdotal powers were most generally united, or subject one to the other;—united, as in the race of the caliphs; royalty subject to the priesthood, as in ancient Egypt, and *vice versâ*, as many examples show. In the oriental monarchies, of ancient as of modern times, democracy is of course null; aristocracy, deprived of hereditary rights, but an ephemeral and insecure distinction.

In the republics of Greece and Rome society took another course. Royalty was abolished; the sacerdotal power was united and rendered subservient to the patrician; the democratic itself was much less in action than we are given to suppose. In the palmy days of the Roman and Athenian republics, when the lands of Italy and Attica were cultivated, and almost solely inhabited by slaves, the free and privileged citizens of the common-

wealth can scarcely be regarded in any other light than in that of a dominant and cruel aristocracy. Their poverty, their moblike character and attributes, cannot save them from the odious appellation.

In Europe, and in modern times alone, were the four principles fully and separately developed, and the classes which they respectively animate raised into independent existence. From the balance of power kept up between these, their mutual jealousies, alliances, collisions, have principally arisen the superior civilisation and policy of Europe. Such is the great characteristic that distinguishes modern from ancient society. It is the great fact to be borne in mind—the great key for solving many a political problem.

If it be asked, why these natural principles of social amelioration lay, some of them at least, dormant in ancient, whilst they were completely developed only in modern times; the answer is, there was one great cause producing, but many minor ones aiding. The new world certainly profited by the example of the old. Traditions of liberty, of law, and of social order, floated down from the wreck of Roman greatness to dark and barbarous times, when they were gathered, and helped to build up the fabric of a new state. From the forests of Germany, too, and the savage life of hunter and pastor, the invading tribes themselves brought the germs of more political wisdom than could have been hoped for,—those of monarchy without despotism, of allegiance without the sacrifice of personal independence. But the great and leading cause, which antiquity may be said to have wanted altogether, was Christianity.

No doubt the Christian religion, having man for its agent, has been accompanied by many evils, and has been perverted to grievous abuses; but the observer of history, amidst the many crimes and ills which he will have to lay to the charge of some of the agents in its promotion, cannot avoid at the same time confessing

that, even when so perverted, it still was productive of inestimable and often unperceived good; and that to it principally, above all other causes, is owing the superior state of modern morals, liberty, and civilisation. This is an assertion of which the proofs must be sought in the ensuing pages. But we may anticipate so far as to observe, that had Christianity done no more than to war with polygamy and slavery, as it did, to the abolition of both, it would fully deserve the praise here bestowed. Nothing contributed so much to change the face of Europe, and to bestow upon it its present benign and happy aspect, as the raising of one half of mankind to their natural equality and rights, and by the same act rescuing the other from the inhumanity and barbarism ever characterising the despotic masters of their fellow-men. The abolition of slavery, without effecting which it would have been idle preaching against polygamy, instantly raised woman in the scale of being. From this alone sprung all the virtues of chivalry, whilst those of private and domestic life were created anew. It was then that a brighter charm spread around the hearth, — that a genius came to preside over it, as far superior to the dumb, dull lares of antiquity, as the worship of the invisible God was to their pagan sacrifices.

We have seen what great use both Pepin and Clovis made of the church in establishing their power. It was the church alone that could then enable royalty to lift itself on the shoulders of the aristocracy. Charles, surnamed the Great, and better known under the appellation of Charlemagne, succeeded to his father Pepin in the year 768, at first conjointly with his brother Carloman, whose death, which took place soon after, left the elder brother sole monarch of the Franks. The first act of Charles showed the warrior eager for conquest. He raised an army, and advanced with it beyond the Loire. For centuries barbarism had been continually making war upon civilisation, conquering, destroying, or blending with it. The contest was not yet over, the amalgam-

ation not perfect. The rude Austrasians of the Rhine had lately subdued the more polite Neustrians of the banks of the Seine. But Aquitaine and the southern provinces were, with respect to Neustria, what Neustria had been to Austrasia, far more civilised and Latinised; and the hate on one side equalled the desire of conquest and domination on the other. Pepin had vanquished the Aquitanians. Upon his death they rebelled, rallying round one of the family of their ancient dukes. But the courage of the southerns failed before the approach of Charles and his northern army; their troops dispersed, and their chief remained a prisoner. Charles, ere he retired, built the strong castle of Fronsac, on the banks of the Dordogne, and garrisoned it, to keep the malcontent province in subjection. The Franks had hitherto a hatred of towns, and a contempt of fortifications. This is the first instance amongst them of dominating a country by means of a fortress, and marks how advanced were the views of Charles beyond those of his time.

Charlemagne's next enemies were the Saxons—the most formidable and obstinate that he encountered during his reign. For the present, however, after a successful campaign in their wild country, his attention was called away towards Italy, where his conquests and alliances produced events as important in their consequences, perhaps, as any to be found in modern history.

If we contemplate the church from the fall of the Roman empire, we shall perceive that in the dark ages its struggle was unceasingly for dominion, authority, and wealth. Unable, perhaps, to make the barbarians feel the superiority of their sacred character, of their creed, and the morals that they taught by eloquence or argument alone, the priesthood felt it requisite to gain temporal power, in order that their spiritual influence might be greater and more salutary. Some wealth was certainly necessary for them, as was some power. But this portion proved but a bait for the avarice and violence of the barbarians, and could only be rendered secure by

its being rendered equal or superior to that possessed by the lay aristocracy.

As Rome was considered superior to all western cities, so was its bishop placed above other bishops. An imperial edict sanctioned this supremacy, which the Romanists vainly seek to found upon the text of the Gospel. Like other prelates, the pope endeavoured to support his spiritual authority by temporal power; but whilst their position allowed them only to acquire territorial wealth and judicial independence, he aimed at sovereignty. When the head of the empire abandoned or was driven from the dominion which he exercised over Rome, as over other cities, the bishops, from the absence of other magistrates, and the total ruin of respectable families, laid hold of the authority thus abdicated, and ruled as delegates or inheritors of the imperial rights. Such was the claim put forth by the early popes. They aimed at sovereignty not only in Rome, but in the Imperial province or Exarchate, as the territory attached to Ravenna was called. The Lombard kings, however, sternly resisted these claims; and themselves, or their vassals, the dukes of Nepi or Spoleto, were in the habit of plundering, enslaving, of making or unmaking pontiffs, according as their interest prompted, or the fortune of war allowed.

In vain did the popes, with all their sacred character, struggle against the power of the sword. When Pepin, however, thought fit to apply to Rome for a title to his crown, the prospect of gaining so powerful an ally was eagerly laid hold on. Every wish of Pepin was granted, and in return his aid was sought against the Lombards. The grateful monarch led an army into Italy, and obliged Astolphus, their king, to yield up not only the territory round Rome, but the Exarchate, to the pope. We may suppose how reluctantly and imperfectly these stipulations were performed, especially after the departure of Pepin, who never afterwards found leisure to turn again his attention or arms towards Italy.

After the death of Pepin, the solicitations of the pope were renewed to his son, whose youthful ambition and piety were soon inflamed. Charles summoned his captains to meet him in the spring at Geneva. Under the Merovingians, these assemblies were the *Champs de Mars*,—March being the month of meeting. But as the Franks, from serving on foot, became cavaliers under the second race, the time was changed to May, for the sake of forage, and the assemblies were called *Champs de Mai*. From Geneva, Charlemagne passed the Alps, routing the Lombards, who opposed his passage. Their king, Desiderius, did not dare to meet the German monarch in the open field, but shut himself up in his capital, Pavia. The Franks invested it; but, unskilled in the art of attacking fortified places, they contented themselves with a strict blockade. Whilst it lasted, Charles advanced to visit the ancient seat of empire. He was received by pope Adrian with such honours as were paid to the Patrician or viceroy of the emperors. Every homage and attention were lavished, and Charles gratefully confirmed the gifts of Pepin to the church,—gifts, however, which he considered more in the light of a fief or benefice than as an absolute cession. He then returned to Pavia, which surrendered, together with its king. Thus ended the kingdom of the Lombards, and Italy became a province of the empire of the Franks.

No sooner was Italy conquered, than we find Charlemagne engaged with the Saxons, routing and slaughtering their armies, over-running their country, and summoning his warriors to the *Champ de Mai* at Paderborn, and other remote places far within the German borders. Some historians consider this inveterate thirty years' war, which Charlemagne carried on against the Saxons, as proceeding from his hatred of barbarism, and his ardent desire to extend the pale of civilisation. But this is too advanced and statesman-like an idea for the age. It seems to have been more from a wish to propagate Christianity that Charles wielded his sword so ruthlessly

against the Saxons. The exploits and example of the Saracens had a great influence over him; and his wish to rival them is far more manifest in his acts and character than has been noticed.

It was long since the Saracens had completed the conquest of Spain, extended their dominions beyond the Pyrenees, and menaced even the empire of the Franks. Charles Martel, the grandfather of Charlemagne, in a bloody victory gained over them near Poitiers, put a final check to the advance of the Saracens in that direction, and introduced the rival nations to the dread and esteem of each other. In that campaign, the Franks suffered greatly from the light horsemen of the Arabs; and it is very probable that the circumstance led them to adopt the mode of fighting on horseback, which soon after became general, and laid an essential foundation of the chevaleresque spirit.

The love of letters, and of those who cultivated them, with the ambition of founding learned institutions, was another trait of Charlemagne's character, caught in part, though not exclusively, from the Saracens. And his system of propagating Christianity by the sword, such as he practised against the Saxons, may be regarded as another principle of conduct and of glory imitated from the warlike votaries of the caliphs.

The same motive would induce him still more, no doubt, to direct his arms against the Saracens themselves. Such an expedition he did undertake. In 778, he passed the Pyrenees, took and dismantled the towns of Pampluna and Saragossa, and compelled all the Arab princes of the region to swear fealty to him. On his return across the Pyrenees, nevertheless, they prepared an ambuscade. The Basques and Gascons, more hostile to the Franks than to the Saracens, joined their aid to the latter; and the united forces awaited Charlemagne and his victorious army as they traversed the valley of Roncesvaux. There never was a combat of which history has given so few details, and fable and poesy so many, as that of Roncesvaux. It appears that the

rearguard of Charlemagne was attacked and cut off. With it perished some of his bravest captains, or, as the romancers afterwards called them, his paladins. Amongst them was his nephew, the famous Roland, the hero of Ariosto, precisely chronicled by Eginhard, as prefect of the frontiers of Brittany. The bad success of this expedition inspired Charlemagne with a disgust of warring against the Saracens. Their frontier was far from Charles's Austrasian province on the Rhine, which furnished his best and most attached soldiers, whilst he could expect nothing save disaffection and treachery from his subjects of Aquitaine.

The land of the Saxons bordered, on the contrary, upon his native dominions, and was not far from his chosen capital, Aix-la-Chapelle. This it behoved him to make the centre of his monarchy, and to repel from it by force of arms the dangerous vicinity of pagans and barbarians. Charlemagne had already led two expeditions against them. In the first, he had overthrown their great idol, and ruined his temple. In the next, he established fortresses and garrisons, compelling the people to be baptized, and to swear fealty to him. The Saxons, however, were not to be quelled by the same facile means as the civilised citizens of Gaul. Again and again they rose in insurrection, headed by Witikind, a hero worthy of being the rival of Charlemagne. As long as Witikind found the spirit of independence alive amongst the Saxons, or as often as he could awake it, he led them against the Franks; and when his vanquished countrymen submitted to the conqueror, he alone disdained to stoop, and fled across the Baltic, from whence he returned more than once to excite the Saxons against Charlemagne. The monarch of the Franks vowed to extirpate the stubborn pagans altogether, and for many successive years he wasted their country, that is, its population and cattle, with fire and sword. Even the proud spirit of Witikind was forced to bow before the conqueror; the Saxon hero appeared at the *Champ de Mai*, and vowed obedience to Charles.

The latter, however, could not trust the Saxons. He transported immense numbers of them from the banks of the Elbe to the interior of his dominions, and at the same time divided their country into benefices, which he distributed to his prelates, that the remnant of the Saxons might become Christian as well as subject.

This is a fit place to mark an important point in Charlemagne's policy. As he conquered himself the greater part of his empire, he had to appoint the rulers or lords of provinces and districts; in other words, counts and dukes. He dreaded the aristocracy, which had raised his family on the ruins of the Merovingians; and his object was to prevent the great charges of the empire, and the governments of provinces, from becoming hereditary. He wanted to form a monarchy on the oriental plan, in which the nobles, enjoying privileges attached to their persons, not to their race, were unable to perpetuate and consolidate their power. This plan, obviously tending to despotism, was fortunately frustrated. Charlemagne's views in this respect led him to lean so much to the church, and to prefer bestowing territorial commands upon prelates rather than upon lay nobles. And the same principle governed both him and Pepin in their unaccountable generosity to the pope of Rome.

The year 800 is the date of a ceremony which, though but a ceremony, and produced in a great measure by accident, has had more influence upon the state of Europe than all the victories of the century. A conspiracy broke out in Rome against pope Leo III.: he was taken prisoner, maltreated, but contrived to escape. He fled for protection to Charlemagne; and that monarch, receiving the fugitive with his wonted piety, led him back to Rome at the head of an army, reinstated him, and took vengeance upon his enemies. It was on the following Christmas that Charles, accompanied by his court and an immense assemblage, heard mass performed by Leo in the church of St. Peter's. At its conclusion, the pope advanced in procession towards

the monarch, placed on his head a crown of gold, and saluted him by the titles of Emperor and Augustus. Thus was the empire of the west restored in the person of Charlemagne. The Frank was seated on the throne of the Cæsar. Nor was the ceremony, as we might deem it, an idle pomp;—it gave rights and dignity and power. Precedent and authority were the only logic of the age; and the magic of a name, not without influence in this day, was all-powerful in that. No very considerable event afterwards occurred to mark the declining years of Charlemagne. He died in 814, at Aix-la-Chapelle, and was buried in the famous *Münster* or cathedral which he had founded.

Charlemagne was a man of extraordinary mind and powers. To the characteristics of a hero and a conqueror, he united those of a monarch and legislator. In an age when the monastic virtues had superseded all others, he alone made those of the statesman temper them; and though so devoid of early education as to be unable to write, he supplied the defect by study throughout the whole course of his busy reign, and became a judge and a patron of letters at a time when the taste seemed utterly extinct save in him. Three hundred years were yet to elapse ere chivalry was to flourish; and yet Charlemagne anticipated its spirit; and the romancers of after time had recourse to him and to his paladins as the fittest models of knightly conduct and chivalrous valour.

The descendants of Charlemagne shall here be treated with as little notice as those of Clovis. Both degenerated, and were trampled under foot by the aristocracy. But the changes which the nation underwent during the reign of the Carlovingians are far better known, and far more important. There is this peculiar character in their history; that personages and incidents, with one exception,—that of Rollo and the cession of Normandy,—are utterly unattractive, whilst the silent progress of society offers a picture full of interest. We can afford to take but a cursory glance at the latter.

There is no political truth more fully known and admitted, than that slaves and freemen cannot continue long to form together the labouring class of the community. Universally, in a generation or two, the freemen disappear; the slaves alone remain upon the soil. Such was the case under the successors of Clovis. The conquests of Charlemagne spread a new race of freemen over the face of Gaul: under his successors they gradually disappeared. Compelled to join the army at their own expense, unprotected from violence, as slaves were, by a powerful master, and disdaining those agricultural occupations practised by bondsmen, the freeman soon abandoned his little property, or saw it wrested from him by force. Most generally he perished, or perhaps was sold to pay off the weight of fines which his poverty forced him to incur.

Of the class of freemen the armies of Charlemagne were composed. There remained still sufficient to carry on the civil wars betwixt his grandchildren: between them the battle of Fontenay was fought in 841, in which forty thousand men are said to have perished; and all the historians of the time agree that the whole force of France perished with them. Henceforward the Normans and Saracens met nowhere with resistance, and the entire kingdom was exposed defenceless to pillage. How was this? The surviving population, excepting the class of prelates and nobles, were serfs and villains, and consequently forbidden and unused to bear arms. The state was without a defender,—the melancholy and inevitable consequence of slavery.

The lesser aristocracy also had greatly decayed. The equal division of property amongst brethren proved nearly as destructive to the noble as to the monarch. In the middle of the ninth century, the church stood alone unimpaired, and seemed at once to be possessed of all property as of all power. The kings, however, inherited the right, tenaciously held and exercised by Charlemagne, of appointing the superior governors, or dukes and counts of provinces. In the reigns of his weak

successors, and principally in that of Charles the Bald, his grandson, the sovereign, in order to gain the support of the leading nobles against his competitors, found it necessary to abandon to them their commands, with hereditary rights thereto. Here the system of Charlemagne, and of the old and oriental monarchies, was departed from, and an hereditary aristocracy formed, possessed, each in his county, of all the attributes of sovereignty, and wanting nothing but the name.

Previously to this, the proprietors of the provinces held their lands of the monarch, and professed allegiance exclusively to him; but now, the dukes and counts came to stand in the royal place. Finding a great portion of the lands destitute of cultivators, owing to the devastations of the Normans, they distributed them to their followers, demanding in return personal allegiance to themselves rather than to the common sovereign. Thus were formed the sub-infeodations, the essential principle of the new political state,— the fibre, as we may say, which soon grew forth into the vast body of the feudal system.

The feeble characters of the Carlovingian monarchs,— together with those frequent partitions and exchanges of territory amongst them, which prevented any power from being consolidated in their hands, or any feeling of loyalty from taking root in the bosoms of the people, was the chief cause of their fall, and of the weakness which abandoned their rights to the possessors of the great fiefs. The frequent invasions of the Normans contributed powerfully, however, towards the same effect.

Almost from the reign of the Antonines to that of Charlemagne, the current of barbaric conquest had continued to overflow the Danube and the Rhine. The great effort of this hero's life was to check its torrent; and he succeeded. For the first time the northern nations became inspired with a dread of the south, and despaired to force their way, by land at least, into the fertile regions where their ancestors had emigrated.

The tide, excluded from its ancient channels, opened new outlets for itself. Denmark and Scandinavia had been long accustomed to rear a surplus population, and to eject it upon foreign climes. The way by land was now closed; the more perilous path of sea lay open, and the barbarians took to it in their rude galleys, — every reader of English history knows with what success. Even Charlemagne had the mortification, towards the close of his reign, to hear that two hundred of their vessels had landed their crews on the coast of Friesland, that the province had been ravaged, and the marauders re-embarked ere an army could be mustered to repel or revenge the insult. Under his successors, the Danes or Normans met of course with more success and more impunity. They sailed up the mouths of all the navigable rivers, the Rhine, the Seine, the Loire, burning and pillaging all the great towns, laying waste the provinces, and dragging the population along with them. They met with no resistance. The reason has been previously stated. The inhabitants of the country were almost all reduced to the servile state, were denied, and ignorant of, the use of arms.

The absolute necessity of resisting these invaders, which the monarch was never equal to, excited at length the efforts and talents of the nobles. They exercised themselves to arms, fortified their dwellings, and made strongholds of them. They converted their serfs into soldiers; gave them land, with a partial property or durable tenure of it, that they might be more attached to their chiefs, and more interested to defend them. Feudality, in fine, arose; and, it is to be remarked, principally in the exposed and invaded provinces. All these foundations of it were laid before the conclusion of the ninth century. In the tenth they became consolidated.

In the year 911, when Charles the Simple, whose name bespeaks his character, reigned in France, the celebrated Rolf, or Rollo, sailed up the Seine with a numerous navy of Danes or Normans, with the usual

purpose of pillaging and levying contributions. He *besieged* Paris and Chartres: the word marks the progress that fortifications, and, what is more important, the defence of them, had made; for formerly the Danes penetrated into every town without resistance. He ravaged even the distant province of Burgundy. Whilst king Charles the Simple sent an archbishop to offer Rollo an entire province of his dominions as the price of peace, Robert, Count of Paris, the ancestor of Hugh Capet and of the present dynasty of France, assembled an army, and attacked the Norman near Chartres. If Rollo gained the victory, it was dearly purchased; and the circumstance rendered him more inclined to accept the offer of Charles the Simple. He was to possess Normandy as its hereditary duke, swearing allegiance to Charles, and suffering himself to be baptized, with his whole army. After three months' negotiation, Charles and Rollo met upon the banks of the river Epte, the boundary of the future duchy, and the treaty was concluded; the French monarch at the same time giving his daughter Gisele in marriage to the Norman duke. The ceremony of swearing allegiance was found to be the only difficulty, Rollo declaring that he would never bow the knee to mortal. One of his followers was ordered, by way of compromise, to perform the humiliating act. The surly Norman obeyed reluctantly; and in the act of raising the monarch's foot to his mouth, lifted it so rudely and so high as to upset the new liege lord of his master. The Normans on the occasion could not refrain from loud laughter. The French dissembled, passed over the insult, and the treaty was not interrupted.

Rollo divided the lands of Normandy amongst his principal followers, and demanded of them an oath of service and allegiance similar to that which Charles had sought of him. These again imitated their chief with respect to their inferiors. Duke Rollo had for advisers the French bishops, whom he had established in his dominions; and they instructed him in all the laws and habits then prevalent in France, which they were natu-

rally anxious that he should adopt, in preference to the rude and pagan manners of his native land. In the formation of a new state of society, as in that of a new city, order and system could more easily be introduced and observed; and the people, who last received the principles of feudality, first brought them to that regularity and perfection, unknown as yet, and afterwards imitated, throughout the rest of France. Thus, as the ravages of the Danish marauders aided most materially in laying the foundations of the feudal system, so their final settlement served to complete and crown the edifice.

CHAP. II.

FROM THE ACCESSION OF HUGH CAPET TO THAT OF SAINT LOUIS, 987—1226.

The reign of Charlemagne resembles the course of a meteor, which sheds a brilliant light around the heavens for a space, but leaves the darkness still more dreary as it disappears. Despite the place and rank which it assumes, it is a stranger to the great system athwart which lies its track, and whose progress it may be said more to disturb than promote. Soon after the death of Charlemagne, his large empire fell asunder by its own weight. The mutual antipathies of different and neighbouring races seconded the rivalry of the Carlovingian princes. The great division was into the German and the French: the first knit together by their old Teutonic tongue; the latter nurtured in the mixed language of a race descended from Gaul, Roman, and Barbarian blended. The Meuse, the Saone, and the Rhone, formed the line of demarcation betwixt them. The elder branch of Charlemagne's descendants chose the country east of this, and brought to it the title of Emperor, with all the vague prerogatives attached to the name. The Carlovingians lost the throne of Germany, even ere they were driven from that of France. The Germanic habit of

holding diets and national assemblies was preserved to the east of the Rhine, whilst it fell into disuse in the west. And there, in consequence, the aristocracy acquired a more united and organised system of superiority, and succeeded not only in rendering their own rights hereditary, but also in making the monarchy elective. A duke of Franconia, a duke of Saxony, were raised successively to the imperial throne; and their example emboldened the family of Hugh Capet to usurp the place of the dwindled Carlovingians of France.

In the reign of Charles the Bald a kind of union was effected, under his sway, of all the countries west of the Meuse and the Rhone. They composed a heterogeneous mass. The link of even a common name applied to the land was wanting. Not only the Carlovingian monarchs, but the Capetians themselves, were long styled kings, not of France, but of the Franks. This circumscribed and ill-united realm it was beyond their power to keep together in obedience to them. A territorial aristocracy had every where arisen, by their very nature independent. Of the great connecting principles of society, neither commerce, nor letters, nor arms, flourished in force sufficient to create general sympathies or interests. Each baron isolated himself in his castle. The life of towns, prevalent in classic times, was exchanged for that of solitude and retirement. With the dignity of the monarch, that of the courtier naturally perished. Power lay in castle and domain. No marvel that the high-born and highly-gifted sought to realise their fortunes, and to erect for themselves, in the provinces, that solid influence which the favour of the monarch could no longer bestow. This is the true cause why those who administered the provinces under Charles the Bald made their several jurisdictions independent; converting rights, in their origin vicarious, into personal and hereditary ones. This final migration of the great nobles from the court to the provinces, bringing with them all the regal attributes of high judicial, financial, and administrative power, was the last blow given to

royalty, and reduced it to the empty prerogative of a name. Yet we shall soon see this degraded principle of authority gradually rise, gathering strength from its unity and fixedness of purpose, so superior in influence to the separated and distracted powers of the nobles; gradually attracting to itself their waifs, whether of privileges or property; rallying around it, now the clergy, now the people; and chiefly supporting itself upon that reverence "which doth hedge a king," — on that mysterious and superstitious feeling of loyalty, which, if unabused, so naturally takes root in the bosoms of a people.

The period of two hundred and forty years, — from the accession of Hugh Capet to that of St. Louis, — is described by Sismondi as "a long interregnum, during which the authority of king was extinct, although the name continued to subsist." A history of France, during this period, is a history, not of its monarch, but of its nobles. And as yet these details are neither heroic nor important enough to be interesting. A duke had sprung up in Aquitaine, a king in Provence. The establishment of the Norman princes has already been narrated. Betwixt them and Aquitaine, Anjou obeyed a warlike count. To the north, the first Baldwin possessed the County of Flanders betwixt the Somme and the Meuse. The Duchy of Burgundy was formed in the east; whilst that of Lorraine was altogether independent of France, and held by tongue as well as *régime* to the empire of Germany. Taking away these provinces from the map of France, a central portion will be found to remain betwixt the Loire and the Flemish border. Even here, however, the last Carlovingians possessed scarcely a castle which they could call their own. The Counts of Paris possessed that city, as well as Orleans. The Counts of Vermandois, whose capital was St. Quentin, at this time ruled Champagne also; but soon after that province came to increase the territories of the Counts of Blois. The only town that obeyed the last reigning descendants of

Charlemagne was Laon, and here they usually resided, unless when obliged to take refuge at Rheims, under the protection of the archbishop, against the attacks of the surrounding nobles.

Of this dominant and independent aristocracy, the most fortunately placed, if not the most powerful, was the Count of Paris. The family had always distinguished itself. Robert the Strong, its supposed founder, had combated the Normans when every other Frank fled at their approach. Eudes had defended Paris against them during a year's siege; and such was the renown acquired by the feat, that he was crowned king during the minority of Charles the Simple. It seems as if this new dignity diminished rather than increased the power of the Counts of Paris, by the envy and enmity which it excited. For when Hugues, of the same family, might with equal ease have worn the crown, he preferred bestowing it upon Louis, surnamed *Outre-mer*, a boy of Carlovingian blood. In the next generation the family grew more powerful. The eldest brother possessed the duchy of Burgundy; the second, Hugh Capet, was Count of Paris and Orleans; whilst their sister, married to the Duke of Normandy, secured the friendship of that powerful prince. Louis V., or *le Fainéant*, held the title of king of Laon. He was without offspring; whilst his uncle, Charles, the sole heir of Carlovingian rights, held the duchy of Lorraine of the emperor, and might be supposed a stranger to France and to its succession. In 987, Louis died at Compiegne, poisoned, it is said, by his wife. As history is silent as to the cause, conjecture has attributed the crime to the ambition of Hugh Capet. That noble took advantage of the opportunity, assembled some of his compeers at Noyon, where the form of an election was gone through in his favour, and soon after Hugh caused himself to be crowned in the cathedral of Rheims.

Charles of Lorraine, though thus prevented of his rights, was neither friendless nor vanquished. He soon took forcible possession of Laon and of Rheims, from which

Hugh Capet was unable to drive him by force of arms. He adroitly, however, contrived to attach to his interests Ascelin, bishop of Laon, whom Charles, somewhat mistrusting, kept with him at Rheims. A conspiracy, formed by Ascelin, was attended with complete success. Charles was seized in his bed, and, together with his nephew, the archbishop of Rheims, delivered over to Hugh Capet. That monarch placed his prisoners in confinement at Orleans, where his competitor, Charles of Lorraine, soon after died.

These, if we except a long quarrel respecting the archbishopric of Rheims, are the sole events of the reign of Hugh Capet, which is supposed to have occupied nine years. Some modern historians regard the founder of the third dynasty of French monarchs as a hero and a master spirit, whose talents won for him a crown. Others, amongst whom is Sismondi, represent him as a pious sluggard, indebted to fortune solely for his elevation. Both are in extreme. We see no proofs of his heroism. But his was an iron age, in which the exertions of individuals had slight power in changing the course of events. Nor does it follow that, because he was pious, he was pusillanimous. He made war on the Count of Montreuil, to recover the relics of St. Riquier, which that Count had stolen. Hugh Capet compelled him to surrender them, and bore himself the venerable remains on his royal shoulders to the abbey of the saint. Such is the account of the chroniclers. But if we observe that Hugh at the same time built and fortified Abbeville, the monarch will not seem altogether sunk in the superstitious votary.

"Who made thee Count?" demanded Hugh Capet of a refractory noble, supposed by some to be Talleyrand, Count of Angoulême. "The same right that made thee king," was the bold reply. Such was the measure of the new monarch's authority. The great feudatories, in consenting to place the crown on one of their own body, thought less of his elevation than of humbling the throne. Their views were sound, if they

considered but themselves,—short-sighted, if they looked forward to posterity. Feudality ascended the throne with Hugh Capet; and, despite the precautions or intentions of the founders, the head of so powerful a system could not long remain powerless himself. Organised as society now was in regular and successive gradations of inferior and superior, a supreme chief became necessary to complete the whole. There was something wanting to crown the structure. The nobles imagined to adorn it with the lifeless image of royalty. But their statue, like Pygmalion's, took life as it became the object of veneration, and grew at length to wield its sceptre with a muscular arm.

Hugh Capet had taken the precaution to have his son crowned and consecrated during his own lifetime. Thus, on the demise of the former, Robert found himself the undisputed king of France. The young monarch was one of those soft, domestic tempers which fate so often misplaces on a throne. He had married Bertha, the widow of the Count of Blois, and was tenderly attached to her. The spouses had the misfortune to be distantly related, and Robert had been godfather to one of Bertha's children by her former husband. The pope considered these circumstances sufficient to render the marriage incestuous; and he accordingly issued a command to Robert, desiring him to put away Bertha, under pain of excommunication. The popes had erected themselves into the censors of princes, and they were especially rigid in prohibiting the marriage of cousins. Such unions, they said, drew down divine vengeance, and were to be avoided, lest they should produce national calamities. Nor was this mere superstition on their part: it had its policy. It was chiefly by intermarriages that the great aristocracy at this time increased their territories and influence. Every obstacle thrown in the way of these alliances consequently checked the growth of their exorbitant might; every difficulty or scruple, being in the power of the pontiff alone to remove, brought considerable advantage, both in revenue and respect, to the

holy see. Robert struggled for four or five years in behalf of his legitimate wife, against the terrors of excommunication; but he was at length compelled to yield, to chase poor Bertha from his presence, and to take another wife, Constance, the daughter of the Count of Toulouse. With her, a woman of more spirit than her predecessor, Robert was less happy. The monarch dreaded her, and was even obliged to do his alms in secret for fear of her reproof. His chief amusement was the singing and composing of psalms, to which the musical taste of that age was confined. In a pilgrimage to Rome, Robert left a sealed paper on the altar of the apostles. The priesthood expected it to contain a magnificent donation, and were not little surprised and disappointed to find it to contain but a hymn of the monarch's composition. The piety of Robert was most exemplary. He was anxious to save his subjects from the crime of perjury: the means he took were, to abstract privately the holy relics from the cases which contained them, and on which people were sworn. He substituted an ostrich's egg, as an innocent object, incapable of taking vengeance on the false swearer.

Such are the facts which we have to relate of a reign of nearly thirty-five years. The good king Robert slumbered on his throne, with a want of vigour and capacity, that would have caused a monarch of the first two races to totter from his seat, or at least would have transferred his authority to some minister or powerful duke. The Capetians as yet, however, unlike the Carlovingians, had neither power nor prerogative to tempt the ambition of an usurper. The very title of king was unenvied. And whilst the sovereign led the choir at St. Denis, France was not the less vigorously governed by its independent and feudal nobility.

The obstinacy of the pope in breaking the marriages of princes produced its natural consequences on the death of Robert. Henry, known as the First of France, was that monarch's son by Bertha, and had been crowned in the lifetime of his father. Constance, how-

ever, attached to her own son Robert, made a league with Eudes, Count of Champagne, and offered him half the town of Sens for his assistance against Henry. The circumstance marks the limit of the duchy of France. Henry, unable to resist so powerful a noble, fled with only twelve companions to the protection of Robert, Duke of Normandy. The Duke furnished the young king with an army, which soon reduced Constance and her supporter to submit and make peace. Henry I. took possession of his circumscribed kingdom, ceding in fief to his brother Robert the duchy of Burgundy, and to the Duke of Normandy, as the price of his aid, a territory called the Vexin, comprised between the Oise and the Epte; thus bringing the Norman frontier within a few leagues of Paris. The Vexin proved afterwards the great subject of contention betwixt the Norman dukes and their sovereign.

Thus settled on his throne, Henry, like his father Robert, sunk into quiet and insignificance. The Count of Champagne, Eudes, eclipsed and overshaded the monarch, who was unable to drive him from Sens. Eudes sustained a long war with the emperor, as a pretender to the throne of Arles and Provence. And when the nobles of Lombardy came to France in search of a sovereign, they made offer of their crown, not to Henry, but to Eudes. Yet, despite of the feebleness both of their power and character, the French monarchs already drew to them a greater share of respect. Henry made war upon the Count of Champagne, and afterwards upon young William the Bastard, Duke of Normandy. His warlike efforts could make no impression on those powerful feudatories: and yet Eudes never attempted to retaliate. The Norman duke, though he routed and slaughtered one of the royal armies, refrained from attacking that which the monarch commanded in person. The feudal system had grown to its full vigour: its laws were established in superstition as well as custom; and it was considered both impolitic and impious for a vassal to war, without flagrant cause of injustice, against

his suzerain. Thus the feudal creed and institutions raised a protecting fence around the feeble plant of royalty, and so enabled it to attain that maturity and height which were hereafter to suffice for its own existence and defence.

This new growth of the monarchic principle, however, had at this time scarce raised itself from the ground. Like a well-born infant, it inspired at most a tender respect. It had neither authority nor influence: these the aristocracy had for a century monopolized. The power of the nobles alone flourished or subsisted in the state. The church first rose to combat them; and this epoch — the reigns of Robert and Henry — marks the commencement of the struggle. In the rude tenth century, the priesthood had been completely trodden down. Duke and baron and chevalier had usurped their lands, seized churches and convents, and appropriated to themselves the right of presentation at least, which they sold or bartered, when one of their own family did not hold the benefice. — The national clergy was utterly unable to withstand their powerful lay brethren. The crown, their natural protector, was not in a condition to aid them. In this state of helplessness they looked to the pope of Rome for support. There they applied — thither they appealed. In rallying round the chair of the Roman pontiff they saw the only hopes of rescuing themselves, their remaining property and privileges, from the hands of the nobles. From near and temporal tyranny, they appealed to the far and the spiritual. The popes took advantage of the movement, and soon erected thereon their supreme and infallible authority. To effect this great end, they left no means unemployed. War was declared against simony; councils were held; prelates deposed; and all the thunders of the church dealt forth on whoever traded in or usurped ecclesiastical benefices. The formation of an electoral college of cardinals secured the papal chair itself from the influence of the emperors. The celibacy of the clergy was at the same time preached and enjoined, in order to separate

them still more from worldly and local interests, and to unite the church into a compact body, such as might vie with feudality itself. The priesthood throughout Europe, who, had they been independent and uninjured at the beginning of the eleventh century, would have been inclined to resist the growing authority of their superior of Rome, in the then dire and spoliated state of the church seconded it with all their might. Royalty was unable to struggle against it, except in Germany, where it did so with very doubtful success. The nobility, scattered, ignorant, and engaged in mutual hostilities, though able to plunder the ecclesiastics of their district, could offer to the united force of the hierarchy but feeble and partial points of resistance. The papal see, like Briareus, attacked them with an hundred arms. Vicegerent of celestial power, it held out in either hand salvation and perdition. Absolution and anathema were both in its gift. Frequent miracles were made to sanction its divine authority; so frequent, indeed, that the pious frauds of that age resuscitated the belief and practice of magic. Having thus formed for itself such an arsenal of arms as no power could oppose, the Roman see framed such a moral code as called for and necessitated their use. Man's natural conscience, with its simple teachings and its unerring warnings, was superseded; the Gospel, so harmonious with its voice, was set aside; and the obsolete canons of Judaism, with the arbitrary glossings of an ill-informed and interested body of men, substituted in its stead.

On such foundations, by such accidents and means, did the Romish church raise up the bulwarks of its authority. The priesthood are not, more than any body of men, to be accused of universal selfishness. The intentions of early pontiffs were no doubt good, pious, and philanthropic. In putting a curb in the mouth and a bar in the way of the aristocracy, they produced the best effects upon the prospects of Europe. A pity it was, that in the combat they found it necessary to lay waste and to prostrate the minds of men, as tem-

poral tyrants did to ravage their properties and enslave their persons. Certain it is, that they corrupted the sources both of rational and moral sense. They removed and destroyed the very landmarks of reason, that they themselves might be the only and arbitrary meters of it. They rendered right undistinguishable from wrong; truth from falsehood; and, administered, by way of antidotes to incredulity, the deadliest poisons of bigotry and superstition.

These accusations should, perhaps, instead of being directed against one class, be extended to man and to the age. The church then took upon itself the difficult and ungrateful task of legislating and improving, which, in our own times, is not accomplished with any wonderful degree of either enlightenment or disinterestedness. And, perhaps, if we consider attentively the legislators and moralists of later days, we shall feel less entitled to declaim against the ecclesiastical sins and errors of the past.

Still, the means employed by the priesthood of this century to subdue and to rule mankind were pernicious and unjust. The ends they had in view were far otherwise; and the first use which they made of their new power proves it. This was to establish the *Trève de Dieu*, or Truce of God; by which some check was put to the unceasing warfare of the nobles, some respite and security procured for the unfortunate peasantry. From Wednesday at sunset till sunrise on Monday it was ordained that all military operations and acts of violence should cease. Feast days were included amongst those devoted to peace, as well as the long intervals of fast and penitence which occur in the Romish church. The persons of all professing a religious life were rendered sacred; and, what perhaps shows the humanity and wisdom of the measure more than any of the regulations, all implements of husbandry were put under the protection of the truce. In any case it was forbidden to destroy them. These laws,

promulgated by the clergy, were enforced under pain of excommunication; and for a certain time they proved effectual in restraining the violence of the nobles. Even when the Truce of God was forgotten, it left behind some principles of national or military law. It first taught the soldier to blend humanity with courage, generosity with daring; and accustomed men to observe some rules of justice, even in hours and acts of violence. Chivalry soon after took up these maxims, which the clergy were not fully able to enforce; and the gallant sons of the aristocracy gave their aid in repressing the most flagrant abuses of the supremacy of their order.

Henry I. died in the year 1060. He had married Anne, a Russian princess; apparently determined to allow the pope no cause of spiritual warfare against him. For, had he espoused a French wife, he could never be certain that she was not related to him in some distant yet forbidden degree.

Henry was succeeded by his son Philip I., who was but seven years of age when he began to reign. Baldwin, Count of Flanders, had married king Henry's sister, and was left guardian to the infant; a charge which he honourably and successfully filled. The minority of Philip was marked by a most important event—the conquest of England by William, Duke of Normandy. For the English reader, it is here sufficient to indicate its date. With this exception, there is scarcely an event in the first thirty-five years of the reign of Philip that demands attention. Whilst the Normans were laying the foundations of their sway in England, the famous Hildebrand, who had been pope under the title of Gregory VII., was establishing the papal supremacy; and the long and important quarrel betwixt pontiff and emperor was then commencing. Philip, whose scanty revenues obliged him to retain and convert to his own use the ecclesiastical revenues of his duchy wherever pretext or opportunity was afforded, was often, during that time, the object of the invectives and menaces of the imperious pontiff. But the French king fortunately

knew how to temporise and yield, and so avoided the misfortunes of his cotemporary the emperor Henry IV.

From the reign of Philip dates an important change in the manners and feelings of the French. For centuries back the general tendency of nations and of provinces, as of individuals, had been to isolate, to separate their interests from those of their neighbours, and to establish a surly and unsocial state of independence. There was no common bond of union, even amongst the French. The feudal system, indeed, generally prevailed; but so rude was its state, so unfixed its laws, and so uncertain the security which it gave, that hitherto the efforts of every individual were required to preserve his rank and his rights. Beyond selfish interests none had leisure to look. About this epoch, however, the feudal law became consolidated: the rights of princes and vassals were somewhat more respected; the habits of mutual warfare were checked by the interference of the clergy, whose frequent assemblies and journeyings, joined with the centralisation of ecclesiastical authority in the pope, rendered communications betwixt different provinces more frequent and more facile. The nation, in short, began to re-knit the links that had long been broken. Religion formed one point of sympathy: another was that warlike spirit, which the age and the system generated, but which was allowed no worthy scope or field in which to display itself. A treacherous ambuscade laid for a neighbour, or the tedious siege of his almost impregnable castle, were the only opportunities for exercising the restless spirit of a rude and uninstructed race. Even these opportunities the church, with its *Trève de Dieu* and the regularisation of the feudal code, were daily taking away. In this time of forced and dissatisfactory quiet, the chivalrous spirit was created. Poets and narrators sprung up, and were rewarded. The hour of inaction was filled by listening to the recital of stirring deeds. In the absence of real war, the mimickry of it was eagerly sought after; and the field of tournament was made a substitute for that of battle. Here was

another pretext and cause for assembly, for communication, for society. But even the perils of a tournay had not interest enough for many. Of these, some betook themselves to far and painful pilgrimages; others, to combat the infidels in Spain; others, to wander at home, and afford protection to the weak and the oppressed, to the damsel and the orphan.

To a public mind thus at length united in common sympathies, and which was at once so restless, so spirited, and so eager, the most welcome offer was a field of adventure. This was found in the East. Pilgrimages had been long the mode. They were the natural consequence of the worship of saints and relics, and of the notion that bodily privations and perils encountered would be considered by the deity as a set-off against sin. It was an age of great crimes and great remorses, and pilgrimages formed then the only medicine of the guilty mind; the Romish church not having yet broached the doctrine, that the payment of money to it was sufficient to purchase a plenary indulgence. For a long period previous to this, pilgrims had been in the habit of flocking to celebrated shrines; but the holy sepulchre at Jerusalem eclipsed all others in honour and efficacy. In 1054, Lithbert bishop of Cambray had led three thousand Flemish pilgrims to the Holy Land. Some years after, double that number performed the same difficult voyage from the Palatinate and the banks of the Rhine. The sufferings which they endured were unheard of and unequalled even in the annals of feudal violence. The recital of them by the pilgrims who had escaped provoked the indignation of their compatriots at home; whilst the immense spiritual advantages, as well as honour, gained by the achievement of such a journey, excited their warmest emulation.

These unarmed expeditions, with the cruelties exercised upon them by the infidels, suggested armed and hostile ones. The universal thought of an age is often referred to the first bold utterer of it. To Peter the Hermit is attributed the honour of the first crusade. He

was one of those who had undergone the sufferings and escaped the dangers of pilgrimage. Of an ardent, enthusiastic character, he conceived the idea of bringing an army of European Christians to rescue the holy sepulchre. With this view he procured letters from the patriarch of Jerusalem to the pope and the princes of Europe, bewailing the captivity of the land hallowed as the scene of the Saviour's birth and life, and supplicating the aid of the faithful to its deliverance. Peter the Hermit bore this mission to pope Urban, who replied that he would second the demand to the utmost of his power. Peter did not rely on the pope's support alone, but traversed Europe himself, preaching in every city, depicting in indignant eloquence the sufferings of Christian pilgrims, and the insolence of Turk and Saracen; representing, at the same time, the merit and advantages of acting upon such just resentment, and of marching, under the banner of the Lord, to the defence of his followers and the rescue of his holy sepulchre. The Greek emperor Alexis sent at the same time an embassy, demanding aid against the infidel. A council was held at Placentia to take these important questions into consideration. It proved not conclusive, however. The Italians, more civilised and less superstitious than surrounding nations, from being near to witness the little sanctity of the existing heads and fathers of the church, as also from the spirit of freedom and commerce which had of late sprung up amongst them, were less enthusiastic than the pope or hermit had hoped. They could not sympathise with the general hatred against the Orientals, with whom they at the time carried on a lucrative trade. They raised neither vote nor acclamation in favour of the crusade.

The council was, therefore, transferred prudently to a more rude and more devout region. Clermont, in Auvergne, was that fixed on. The knights, barons, and bishops of France hurried, full of enthusiasm, to the rendezvous. Peter the Hermit first addressed the assembly with the heat of his wonted eloquence. Pope Urban followed him, and the words of the pontiff seemed more

replete with unction than even the hermit's. No motives of worldliness, of self, or prudence, checked the enthusiasm of the assembly at Auvergne. When Urban, in the midst of his harangue, introduced the verse of the Gospel, "Whosoever shall quit house, or father, or mother, or wife, or lands, for my name, shall receive an hundred fold," the whole audience interrupted the speaker with one burst of assent; and the universal cry of "God wills it! God wills it!" came from the crowd. Urban took up the cry, and declared it to be immediately dictated by the Divinity. It was a miracle, a striking manifestation of the will of Heaven. The painter's art, better than the historian's, might represent the scene that occurred;—the holy frenzy, the devout resolve, the tear of penitence, the rapt emotion. The pope imposed silence with his hand, and a form of general confession was read to them openly, and repeated by them. They then arose. The bishop of Puy was the first to assume the cross, and his example was followed by every chief of importance present. The brother of king Philip, the Count of Toulouse, Godfrey of Bouillon, Duke of Lower Lorraine, and his brothers, and Robert, Duke of Normandy, son of the Conqueror, were amongst the most renowned undertakers of the crusade. A year's interval was allowed for the preparations necessary to the expedition. The zeal of the hermit Peter could not tarry, however, for the lapse of that time. He collected many thousands of the poorer adventurers, who had neither affairs to arrange nor estates to sell. At their head he set forth, following the course of the Danube, towards Constantinople. The Greeks hastened to transport the tumultuous throng over the Bosphorus. In Asia they soon fell victims to their want of discipline and means, and to the vengeance of the Turks. In a few months after, the better ordered army of the crusaders marched under several commanders. In May 1097 they vanquished the soldan of Nicea in battle, avenging the rout of Peter the Hermit and his followers. In June of the following year the crusaders were masters of An-

tioch; and in 1099 they made their victorious entry into Jerusalem, of which Godfrey of Bouillon was declared the king.

While the best blood and interests of France were thus engaged in a chivalrous war, king Philip was occupied in obscure quarrels with pope Urban and William Rufus of England. In the last year of this century, finding his vigour decline, he associated his son Louis with him in the government, and henceforth became a cipher. Philip died in 1108. Feebleness and inertness mark the reign of the four first Capetians. In the successor of Philip the race began to partake in the general activity of the age.

The reign of Louis VI., better known as Louis *le Gros*, or the Fat, began in the lifetime of his predecessor. He was the first French monarch that entertained any settled maxim of government, or whose ideas reached a system of policy. His predecessors had been the creatures, the followers, of events. Louis knew how to control these. The whole effort and aim of his reign was to reduce the barons of the duchy of France to obedience. His views did not extend to the kingdom. He prudently limited his exertions to the counties within or bordering upon his power. History may disdain to recount minutely the wars carried on by Louis against the barons of Montmorenci, whose castle rose within view of his capital, or against the lords of Puiset, of Montlheri, or of Couci, possessors of strongholds within a few leagues of Paris, from whence they were wont to sally forth to the plunder of travellers and merchants. And yet, of all the wars that adorn or sully the French annals, none were more wise in aim, more useful or important in consequences, than these petty enterprises of Louis. His first attempt was against the Burchards, lords of Montmorenci, who were continually in quarrel with the abbaye of St. Denis; and, if we are to believe the chronicles of the day, written for the most part in that famous convent, the Montmorencis were impious spoliators and enemies of the church. Louis stood forth the champion of the

clergy, and brought the Burchards to reason. His next efforts were directed against the chateau of Montlheri and its rapacious owners, who interrupted all communication betwixt the royal towns of Paris and Orleans, greatly to the detriment of commerce and the annoyance of the townsfolk. Louis here took care to have a pretext also. He did not assert his royal authority, and arm to avenge it. It was as the ally of the clergy that he subdued the Montmorencis; it was as the friend of commerce, and the avenger of the plundered burgesses, that he besieged Montlheri. Louis XI. did not use more policy and feint in his undermining of the aristocracy, than did Louis VI.; the latter, unfortunately for his own fame, having only the smaller sphere of action.

Nevertheless, the name of Louis the Fat stands connected with one of the most important revolutions in the civil history of France, viz. the enfranchisement of the *communes* or commons, as the early municipalities were called. From him towns received their first charters; from his reign their first liberties date. We have seen that, from the earliest period of this history, the mass of the people enjoyed no influence or consideration. Utterly enslaved at first, the feudal system somewhat improved their condition, and admitted them to partial privileges. Still the aristocracy pressed them down with an iron hand. Serfs in the country, villains in the town, their property and life were held under sufferance of the seignor rather than as sacred rights. Man's natural pride alone might cause him to revolt against such injustice: but the towns of Europe were not without traditions of a more equitable state of things. They had enjoyed freedom as municipalities under the Roman empire; and, however politically dependant, all local authority had been exercised by the civic council and magistrates. To the remembrance of these days the townsmen held with obstinacy. The precedent was recorded, if not on parchment, at least in the hearts of the oppressed. It was handed down from father to son; and not all the ignorance and violence of the dark ages

proved sufficient to erase or tread out the old vestiges of municipal freedom.[1] It happened, too, that the struggle betwixt church and aristocracy was maintained more especially in towns. The bishop and the count almost always disputed the sovereignty of the town; and popular rights, in consequence, must have been at times invoked by the weaker party. In Italy, where this struggle was fiercest, owing to the quarrels betwixt pope and emperor, the cities took the earliest advantage of this position. The citizens, leagued together in their own interest, formed *communes* or municipal councils, and, balancing their attachment and support betwixt the contending parties, succeeded in establishing their independence. Security thus gained from their rapacious masters, commerce, wealth, order, respect,—the natural consequences of liberty,—were found to follow. The south of France first caught this spirit from their neighbours on the other side of the Alps. The towns of Provence and Languedoc early erected themselves into little republics, more or less independent of neighbouring princes, under the rule of their own *consuls*. But Languedoc or Provence could not as yet be considered as making part of the French monarchy. Under Philip I. the towns of the north began to imitate those of the south. Mantes, according to some, was the first commune; according to others, Noyon. It was in the reign of Louis the Fat that the communes openly asserted and established their civic privileges. The only revenues of that prince were drawn from his good cities; and it behoved him, on this account, to set them free from the yoke of other masters or spoliators. The formation of the civic magistracies and militia checked mightily the arrogance of the barons: and Louis, without supposing in him any principle of policy too profound or foreseeing for his age, could not but perceive this tendency, and encourage it. Beauvais, Noyon, Laon, Amiens, and Soissons, had all charters granted them by Louis the Fat. In some towns the bishops favoured, in some they opposed, the enfranchisement of the com-

mons. The barons were in general averse. The king was obliged to wage a tedious war against the family of Couci, which, by means of a fortress, kept possession of the town of Amiens. He at length took and razed it; and the seignory of the De Coucis merged in the township of Amiens.

It was not merely by military exploits, and by the elevation of the *tiers état* or third estate, that the royal authority progressed during the reign of Louis VI. The judicial authority attributed to the monarch by the feudal system, and exercised by him in his court or *council of peers*, made him the arbiter of disputed successions. It was thus that Philip I. had extended his influence over the province of Berri. His son Louis interfered in the quarrels of the house of Bourbon, where a minor struggled against the usurpation of his uncle. Louis entered the Bourbonnois with an army in 1115, took Germigny, the principal fortress of Aymon of Bourbon, and compelled him to submit. Not since the early Carlovingians had the banners of a king of France been seen so far from his capital. The continued rivalry betwixt the Normans or English, and the French, excited and kept alive the warlike spirit of both nations. Henry I. reigned in England, and also in Normandy, which he had usurped from his brother Robert. Louis took the part of the latter, as well as of his son William; and mutual wars, or rather ravages, were frequent, with intervals of peace, betwixt the nations.

One event that occurred during these wars marks strongly the cruel spirit of the age: — Henry I. was struggling against an insurrection of the Norman barons in favour of his nephew: this was the moment chosen by the Count of Breteuil to demand of the king the fortress of Ivry, which adjoined his possessions. The count had married Henry's natural daughter Juliana, and hence esteemed that he had a claim upon his generosity. It was not the moment to refuse the demand of a noble. Henry, however, was reluctant to give up Ivry; but, in order to content Breteuil, he ordered

Harenc, the royal governor of the town, to deliver up his son to the lord of Breteuil; at the same time making the count deliver his daughters by Juliana, as counter-hostages, to his own keeping. He thus ensured that Harenc would not sally from his place of command, or otherwise make use of it to annoy or injure the Count of Breteuil. The latter, however, was not satisfied with the arrangement. He laid siege to the fortress of Ivry, and threatened to put his hostage, the governor's son, to death, in case the latter did not surrender his trust. Breteuil reasoned that his children would, at all events, be safe in the custody of their grandfather. Harenc would not deliver Ivry; and the Count of Breteuil, in pursuance of his threat, put out the eyes of his young hostage. Raoul de Harenc flew to the feet of Henry, and, in the rage of sorrow and resentment, demanded the daughters of his enemy, that he might use the terrible right of reprisal. Henry hesitated. The monarch was cruelly situated: but the ideas of feudal justice prevailed in his mind over attachment to his kin. The monarch delivered his grandchildren, the daughters of the Count of Breteuil, and Harenc tore out their eyes, and cut off their noses, in execution of the vengeance that he deemed just.

The principal feat of the war betwixt Henry and Louis was produced by accident. The two kings, each at the head of some five hundred knights, encountered one another in the plain of Brenneville. An engagement ensued, in which Louis was routed, and most of the French made prisoners. Only three were killed: to such perfection had defensive armour been brought—so much had war sunk to the mimickry of a tournament. Another enterprise of Louis, in the year 1121, marks the rapid increase of the king's influence. A few years since he had established his authority in the Bourbonnois: now he extended it to Auvergne. In a quarrel betwixt the count and bishop of Clermont, the latter appealed to Louis, who summoned the count to his supreme court, and, on his refusal to appear, marched with an army and

subdued him, as he had previously the lord of Bourbon. The counts of Anjou and of Nevers aided him in the expedition. They felt no reluctance in carrying into effect the decrees of that court of peers of which they formed a part. Louis VI. died in 1137. It is strange that history could find for this monarch no epithet save that of *the Fat*, at the same time that it records innumerable proofs of a talented mind, of an active and enterprising spirit.

Towards the conclusion of this monarch's reign, fortune came to reward and crown his efforts for the extension of the royal authority. William, Count of Poitiers, about to undertake a pilgrimage, from which he had the presentiment that he never should return, offered his daughter Eleonora in marriage to Louis the Young, son of Louis the Fat. She was the heiress of her father's possessions, which surpassed in extent and importance those of the king of France himself, comprising Guienne and Poitou,—all the country, in fact, betwixt the Loire and the Adour. The marriage was celebrated at Bourdeaux; and soon after it arrived tidings of the deaths both of the king and of the Count of Poitiers. Thus Louis VII., or the Young, succeeded to dominions and authority infinitely more ample than those which his father had inherited. But the want of talent in the son did away with all these advantages. Nevertheless he commenced his reign with spirit. He chastised several refractory nobles, and resolved to support the queen's rights to the county of Toulouse. Louis besieged that town. He failed in taking it, indeed: but the king of France, at the head of an army, made his name and power known for the first time to the inhabitants of the south. During a war carried on about the same time against Thibaud, Count of Champagne, an accident occurred, which had a marked effect upon the future conduct and character of Louis the Young. He had taken by storm the castle of Vitry, and set fire to it. The flames chanced to catch the neighbouring church, into which the population had crowded, to preserve themselves from

the fury of the soldiery. It appears that they had no means of escape. Thirteen hundred men, women, and children, perished in the conflagration. Louis was horror-struck on beholding the mass of half consumed bodies, and the weight of the remorse hung ever after upon him, and weighed down his spirit. It was the chief cause that induced him to assume the cross, and to lead that expedition to Jerusalem which is known in history as the second crusade.

Edessa, one of the principal towns possessed and garrisoned by the French in Palestine, was taken by the sultan of Aleppo, and the inhabitants put to the sword. The tidings stirred up all Christendom to vengeance. Assemblies and councils were called, and a final one met at Vezelay, in which the enthusiasm of that of Clermont was equalled. The celebrated Saint Bernard was the eloquent haranguer upon this occasion, and filled the place of Peter the Hermit; having, however, unlike his predecessor, the good sense to refuse the conduct of the expedition when it was offered to him. The emperor Conrad and Louis VII. each led an army of upwards of a hundred thousand men through the valley of the Danube to Constantinople. No sooner, however, had they passed into Asia, than the Germans, who preceded the French, were routed and cut to pieces. The army of the latter took a more circuitous path, but scarcely with better fortune. One half of their number was cut off; the rest reached Satalia, a sea-port opposite to Cyprus, where the king and his nobles, weary of the tedious march by land, took shipping for Palestine, leaving their followers to make the best of their way on foot, without guide or leader. All that remained perished. And of the two hundred thousand warriors who had left the west of Europe, bold of spirit and resplendent in arms, Louis only, with a band of some hundred of cavaliers, reached the Holy Land. The ignominy of this ill success, and the desertion of his followers, fell upon king Louis; and he felt it, not to rally and redeem his character, but to sink under the

shame. He abandoned the feelings of the monarch and the warrior for those of the pilgrim; refused at first to undertake any enterprise against the infidels; and stole from Antioch to Jerusalem like a craven. If his subjects were discontented with such weakness in their sovereign, Eleonora of Aquitaine was still more disgusted with such a husband: she refused longer to remain on any friendly terms with him. The historians of France, who detest the memory of her who transferred half the provinces of the kingdom to the Plantagenets, accuse her of lightness of conduct on this occasion; but their testimony is much to be mistrusted. Not a single feat of arms marked the stay of Louis in Palestine, where he lingered until 1149, ashamed to return. He did so at length, and it was to show that all prudence had forsaken him as well as courage. The quarrel betwixt him and Eleonora was at its height. He withdrew his garrisons from Aquitaine, more in spite than policy. A divorce was pronounced betwixt the spouses by an assembly of prelates at Beaugency, and Eleonora soon after married Henry II. of England, bringing with her the rich dowry of her inheritance.

Hence dates the rivalry betwixt the kings which fills up the rest of their reigns. In perusing their history, and beholding the superior activity, talents, and power of the English monarch, we expect to see him crush his rival and usurp his place. But in that age war tended more to mutual annoyance than to conquest: it was a livelihood to the needy, a portion to the powerful; and neither were very serious or bent upon the destruction of an enemy. A prisoner that could afford a large ransom, was chiefly looked to by each soldier in the event of a battle. Feudal rights and supremacy were also held in high respect; and the name of suzerain, though but a name, often supplied to Louis the place of the armies of his vassal Henry. In time the church came to fling itself into the scale. The persecution and murder of Thomas à Becket roused all the clergy in enmity to Henry, and Louis took advantage of their aid.

Later still, the French monarch used the more unworthy expedient of exciting the sons of Henry to rebel against their parent; and throughout, he contrived to supply by intrigue what he wanted in martial spirit, activity, and power. Although the divorce of Eleonora deprived Louis of the possession of Aquitaine, still the marriage was not useless to him: it made the monarch's name to be known, and his authority invoked, in the south. When Henry endeavoured to make good those same rights of Eleonora upon Toulouse that Louis himself had supported, the latter took the part of the Toulousans, and defeated the intentions of his rival. And he was equally successful in support of the people of Auvergne. Louis VII. was long without a son, and at length obtained one by dint of prayer. When the life of the prince was threatened by a fever, the anxious parent undertook a pilgrimage to Canterbury, to the tomb of St. Thomas à Becket, for his recovery. The young Philip recovered; but Louis, on his return, was struck with a palsy, under which he lingered for the space of a year, and died in 1180.

Two centuries had now elapsed since the accession of Hugh Capet. At that period France was divided into a thousand petty states, each shut up in its barbarism. Selfishness, violence, and want of faith, were general characteristics. Courage was the only virtue prized; independence the only boon sought after. Now, however, a union, a concentration, had taken place. The unforeseen development of the feudal system had raised the king supreme above the aristocracy; and this, together with other causes, amongst which the crusades rank foremost, had assimilated the formerly disjointed parts of the state, and given a general bond of sympathy to the nation. Social habits and frequent intercourse excited emulation of a kind less coarse and more varied than the mere struggle betwixt strong and weak. The creation of wealth and luxury suggested the more refined wants of the imagination and the heart. Selfishness and fraud gave way to the chivalrous virtues. A

general tendency to enthusiasm and devotion distinguished the rising age; and both were extreme, to whatever object directed, whether towards religion, towards royalty, or to the fairer sex.

Philip Augustus, who was about fifteen years of age when he began to reign, was already the nursling of court adulation and homage. His predecessors had not attained dignity sufficient to expose them to this bane of the royal nature. Congratulations, couched in the language of oriental hyperbole, had greeted his birth. He was styled the *Dieu-donné*, the august; and self-constituted laureates began already to celebrate the majesty of the monarch of the French. Formerly, the surrounding nobles had disdained to dispute court favour or influence; but the first years of Philip's reign were taken up with the rivalry of the houses of Flanders and Champagne, which each sought to be the masters and ministers of the young sovereign. Henry II. of England gave his support to the Counts of Champagne, and the partisans of Flanders were obliged to retire from Paris. They formed a league, and menaced war; but Philip, with the English monarch's aid, easily overcame the malcontents. Henry showed generosity on this occasion. Instead of profiting by the divisions of the French, and keeping them alive, he frankly supported the young king against his refractory barons. He was king himself, and sympathised with royalty. Philip ill repaid this kindness: he imitated his father's policy in seducing the sons of the English monarch from their allegiance; and their frequent ingratitude at length broke the heart of the sensitive and passionate monarch. Richard, Duke of Aquitaine, known as Cœur de Lion, and his father's successor on the throne, was the especial friend and ally of Philip in these quarrels; and for a long time the princes shared the same tent and the same bed.

Meantime a third crusade began to be preached. This prevalent enthusiasm, like the rebellions of an oppressed yet brave people, was sure to arouse itself and re-awaken

as soon as time had elapsed sufficient to allow the disasters of the past to be forgotten. Saladin had recently taken Jerusalem. Fugitives instantly filled Europe with the dismal tidings. The cry for a crusade became general: it was no longer, however, the church that called a council to debate and decide upon the question; another power had arisen to rob the clergy of their initiative. The king called a *parlement* of his barons at Gisors, and there a third crusade was determined upon. Cœur de Lion was the first to assume the cross; and king Philip, only hurt at being anticipated, followed his example. Frederic Barbarossa also took the same resolution. That emperor died, owing to imprudently bathing in a river of Asia Minor, ere he reached the Holy Land.

In June of the year 1190, Philip Augustus received the pilgrim's scrip and staff from the hands of the abbot of St. Denis. Richard received his at Tours; and it was remarked, as an omen, that, as he leaned on the staff, it broke under his weight. In order to avoid the disasters of former crusades, they were to proceed to Palestine by sea. The two kings wintered in Sicily on their voyage thither, and there laid the foundation of their future jealousy and hate. The crusaders found the barons of Syria engaged in the siege of Acre. Their arrival hastened its surrender, and at the same time marked it with crime. Richard caused upwards of two thousand captives to be massacred in cold blood, and Philip was guilty of a similar piece of cruelty. The monarchs, indeed, had some slight breach of stipulations to allege, or might excuse their conduct as a reprisal for that of Saladin, who put to death many of the prisoners whom he made at the battle of Tiberias, more especially all those whose tonsure marked them to belong to the order of the Templars. It was thus that the ferocity of oriental manners came to alloy the more generous spirit of chivalry. In Palestine the French learned to be sanguinary and merciless towards their religious enemies, and hence it was that the fair page of their history was

soon afterwards stained by the massacre of those whom they called heretics at home.

Philip Augustus could not long endure the superior renown and prowess of Cœur de Lion. He seized the pretext of an illness to quit Palestine and abandon the field of glory to his rival. Returning home, he besought the pope to release him from the oath which bound him to respect the rights and territories of a brother crusader. The pontiff refused: but Philip felt himself sufficiently absolved by the Machiavelian law of monarchical policy. And fortune, in making Richard fall captive to the Duke of Austria, in his return from the Holy Land, seemed to favour the envious designs of the French monarch. Philip no sooner was informed of Richard's captivity, than he leagued with his brother John, and invaded Normandy. He took several towns and castles, but was repulsed from before Rouen. At length Richard was released, or, as Philip wrote to his confederate, "the devil broke loose." We expect on this occasion to read of a furious war betwixt the sovereigns. And yet no brilliant feat, no general engagement, marked that which ensued. Petty treason and short truce, varied by a skirmish or a marauding party, were all the effects produced by the envy of Philip and the resentment of the lion-hearted king. The death of the latter by an arrow-shot, as he besieged a castle in the Limousin, left a less formidable rival to Philip in the person of king John.

The writer of fiction never imagined a baser character than that of John. His cowardice and meanness form a phenomenon and an exception in the feudal ages. The nullity of such a rival converted Philip Augustus from the powerless intriguer to the conqueror and the hero. The latter, who knew the character of John, no sooner heard of his succession than he prepared to take advantage of it. And yet intrigue was the first weapon he employed. As he had seduced Richard from his father's allegiance, and John from that of Richard, Philip now espoused the cause of Arthur of Britany,

the nephew of John, proclaiming his right not only to Britany, but to Poitou, Anjou, and Touraine. War ensued, during which chance made Arthur prisoner to his uncle. All acquainted with the pages of Shakspeare know too well the young prince's fate. Philip was in the mean time checked in his projects by the court of Rome, which had laid an interdict upon him, on account of his divorce from Ingeburga of Denmark. And the preaching of a fourth crusade about the same time took from him the interest and the aid of many nobles and chevaliers. This expedition scarcely belongs to our history. It was undertaken in concert with the Venetians; but, instead of contributing to the defeat of the Saracens, the crusaders turned their forces against the Greek emperor, and made themselves masters of Constantinople, where they established a Latin dynasty. By the taking and sack of Constantinople the cavaliers of the West did more injury to the Christian cause than ever their victories in Palestine worked detriment to the power of the followers of Mahomet.

Philip was, during the same interval, engaged in the conquest of Normandy, which the imbecility and cowardice of John delivered to his arms without defence. Roger de Lascy held the fortress of Andelys for several months against the French, and was the only valiant servitor of an unworthy monarch. The barons and warriors of England disdained to fight under his banner. There was as yet none of that rivalry which afterwards sprang up betwixt the nations. The monarchs of both were French princes, speaking the French tongue: and, although subsequent historians have given a national colour to the combats and conquests of Philip, the struggle was almost purely personal. Rouen, the capital of Normandy, surrendered to him (1204), without John's making a single effort to preserve it. And thus a few years of the reign of one weak prince more than counterbalanced the long established superiority of the monarchs of England.

It has been seen what use the French monarchs made of their courts of peers, and of the judicial supremacy allowed them, in extending their authority over barons heretofore independent. Philip dared to apply the same principle to the dukes of Normandy, which his father had successfully done with regard to the counts of Bourbon and Auvergne. He summoned John before his suzerain court, to answer for the murder of Arthur and other crimes. Henry II., or Richard, would have given fit answer to such a summons. The Norman princes always held their homage to be that *by parade*, or courtesy, not *homage-liege*. But John had neither the sense of his dignity, nor the spirit to maintain it. He allowed the jurisdiction of Philip's court, though he feared to obey his summons; and he thus seemed to allow a legal right to the usurpations of Philip. The latter, indeed, appeared to feel the want of dignity in the assessors of his court. All nobles holding their lands directly of the king were peers in his parliament; and thus the petty lords of the counties of Paris and Orleans ranked equally with the dukes of Burgundy or the counts of Flanders. Philip remedied this, by appointing twelve great peers, or rather by pretending that such a number had always existed since the twelve paladins of Charlemagne. Of these, six were clerics, six laics; the latter being the dukes of Normandy, of Aquitaine, of Burgundy, the counts of Toulouse, Flanders, and Champagne. This division of the aristocracy in the high and low nobility, was, however, as yet but nominal; the lesser barons still continued to consider themselves as the peers of the greater, and to have an equal voice in the royal courts. It is important for the reader to mark the rise of this feudal institution, and equally so to mark the difference of its fate and progress in France and in England. In the former country, the *parlement* became amalgamated with lawyers, and preserved to the last its judicial functions, whilst its legislative authority became but a shadow. In England, on the contrary, it guarded the more precious privilege of legis-

lation, abandoning a considerable portion of its judicial rights.

By the discomfiture of John, Philip Augustus united to the monarchy of France not only Normandy, but the provinces of Maine, Anjou, Touraine, and Poitou. Artois he had acquired as the dowry of his wife, Isabella of Hainault. The counties of the south remained still independent of his sway. They looked to the king of Aragon as their suzerain; and there existed far more congeniality of feelings and habits betwixt the Spaniards and Provençals, than betwixt the Provençals and French. Certain events of the reign of Philip, which we are about to relate, destroyed the independence of the people of the south, as well as their connection with the Aragonese, and extended the authority of the French monarch to the Mediterranean and the Pyrenees.

Whilst Philip Augustus adroitly wrested Normandy and its dependencies from the hands of John, a series of events took place in Languedoc, which had the effect of destroying its independence, and of bringing that fine region not only nominally, as it had hitherto been, but really under the dominion of the kings of France. The countries bordering on the Mediterranean had ever been foremost in the path of civilisation. They were still so. The inhabitants of that part of France so situated far surpassed their northern neighbours in refinement, in enlightenment, and wealth. A thriving commerce was the chief source of these advantages, joined with the municipal liberty, which they enjoyed even to a greater degree than countries around them. The towns were governed by consuls, like those of Italy; and, being freed from either papal or imperial pretensions, were far more tranquil than the republics of that land. The feudal lords lived in amity with the *bourgeoisie*, and shared its wealth; communicating at the same time to the middling ranks no small portion of their own chivalrous spirit. Little agitated, at least for that age, by the tumults and contentions of war, the Provençals gave themselves to the cultivation of those intellectual employments which wealth

and leisure, peace and a fine climate, suggest. In their valleys the muse of modern times had taken birth. They were the first poets of modern tongues. Nor did the troubadours confine their strains to the celebration of heroic deeds or the pleadings of love; they were moralists and satirists, and undertook to lash as well as to amuse the age. The church was the chief object of their alternate ridicule and resentment. Dante and Petrarch, as well as our own Chaucer, afford samples of this spirit. They exclaimed against the licentious lives of the clergy; rallied them on their rigid upholding of abstract dogmas, and their lax observance of moral ones. The troubadours stood forth as the asserters and avengers of common sense. And thus the earliest of modern poets perhaps merit the honour of being esteemed the first reformers.

The speculations of the theologian and the scruples of the devout soon came to swell a passing disgust into permanent dissent. A numerous sect sprung up in Languedoc, which, abjuring much of the corrupt morality and absurd tenets of the Romish church, was led of course to deny the authority of the pope and of his priesthood. For a long time the Holy See seemed not alive to the importance of this sect. It was pope Innocent III. who first perceived its dangerous tendency, and who took certain steps for its destruction. He issued interdicts against such princes as should favour them, and offered the spoil of the heretic to whoever should subdue and slay him. The principal lord of the south of France was at that time Raymond VI. count of Toulouse; and he at least tolerated the Albigenses, as those primitive reformers were called, aware of their moral purity and sincere devotion. Peter of Castelnau, the pope's legate, reproached the count of Toulouse with his want of zeal, and was indignant at his forbearance to extirpate the new opinions by fire and sword. The legate used no measured language; he not only excommunicated Raymond, but insulted him in his court, and then took his departure. The count of Toulouse

expressed his indignant feelings before his followers as Henry II. did after the insolence of Thomas-à-Becket, and with the same fatal effect. On the day after, Peter of Castelnau fell under the dagger of a gentleman of the count's, in a hostelry on the Rhone, where he had stopped.

Pope Innocent was driven to transports of rage on learning the assassination of his legate. He not only excommunicated the count of Toulouse, but promulgated a crusade against him. He called on all the nobles of France, on its princes, and its prelates, to join in the *holy* war, to assume the cross, as being engaged against infidels. And the same privileges and indulgences were granted to the crusader of this civil war, that previously were bestowed on those who embarked fortune and life in the perilous attempt to rescue the Holy Land from the Saracen. Spoil, wealth, and honour in this world, together with certain salvation in the next, were now offered at too cheap a rate to be refused. Crowds of adventurers flocked to the standard; and a formidable army was assembled at Lyons in the spring of 1209, under the command of the legate commander, Amalric abbot of Citeaux. The pope at the same time created a new ecclesiastical militia for the destruction of heresy. The order of St. Dominick, or of the friars inquisitors, was instituted; and these infernal missionaries were let loose in couples upon the hapless Languedoc, like blood-hounds, to scent their prey and then devour it.

Raymond count of Toulouse had neither the force nor the courage to oppose so formidable an invasion. He repaired to the crusader's army, delivered up his fortresses and cities, and suffered the humiliating penance of a public flogging in the church of St. Giles. The count's relative and feudatory, Raymond Roger viscount of Beziers and Carcassonne, regions infected with the heresy of the Albigenses, came also to make submission. The abbot of Citeaux, who was prudent though to accept that of the count of Toulouse, feared to lose all his prey. He refused to admit the exculpation of the viscount of

Beziers, and plainly told him that his only chance was to defend himself to the utmost. The young viscount courageously accepted the advice. He summoned the most faithful of his vassals, abandoned the open country as well as towns of lesser consequence to the enemy, and restricted his efforts to the defence of Beziers and of Carcassonne. He shut himself up in the latter. The fury of the crusaders first fell upon Beziers: they had scarcely sat down before the unfortunate town, when a sally of the garrison was repulsed with such vigour that the besiegers entered the town together with the routed host of the citizens. Word of this unexpected success was instantly brought to the abbot of Citeaux, and his orders were demanded as to how the innocent were to be distinguished from the guilty. "Slay them all," exclaimed the legate of the vicar of Christ; "the Lord will know his own." The entire population was in consequence put to the sword; nor woman nor infant was spared. Upwards of 20,000 human beings perished in the massacre — the sanguinary first fruits of modern persecution. Carcassonne was next invested, bravely attacked, and as valiantly defended; the young viscount distinguishing himself in defence of his rights, while Simon de Montfort earl of Leicester was the most prominent warrior of the crusaders. At length the legate grew weary of the viscount's obstinacy, and offered him terms. He gave him a safe-conduct, sanctioned by his own oath and that of the barons of his army. Raymond Roger came with 300 of his followers to the tent of the legate. "Faith," said the latter, "is not to be kept with those who have no faith;" and he ordered the viscount and his friends to be put in chains. The inhabitants of Carcassonne found means to fly. In a general assembly of the crusaders, the lordships of Beziers and Carcassonne were given to Simon of Montfort, in reward of his zeal and valour; and to make the gift sure, it was accompanied with the person of his rival. The unfortunate viscount, the victim of the legate's perfidy, soon after perished in prison.

The victory of the crusaders was of course followed by executions at the stake and on the scaffold. The friars inquisitors of the order of St. Dominick did not relax their zeal. A general revolt against De Montfort was the consequence, in which the people of Toulouse joined. The Provençal army was headed by Peter king of Aragon, the uncle of the late viscount of Beziers. It was he who had persuaded the unfortunate viscount to trust himself to the legate, and to him in consequence fell the duty of taking vengeance. The cross, however—the profaned cross—was still successful. The Provençals were routed by Simon de Montfort at the battle of Muret, and the king of Aragon was slain. This victory seemed to establish the power of De Montfort in Languedoc. He took possession of all the provinces of his rival, even of the town of Toulouse; and an assembly of prelates sanctioned the usurpation. But the cruel spirit of De Montfort would not allow him to rest quiet in his new empire. Violence and persecution marked his rule; he sought to destroy the Provençal population by the sword or the stake, nor could he bring himself to tolerate the liberties of the citizens of Toulouse. In 1217 the Toulousans again revolted, and war once more broke out betwixt count Raymond and Simon de Montfort. The latter formed the siege of the capital, and was engaged in repelling a sally, when a stone from one of the walls struck him and put an end to his existence. The death of De Montfort was of course considered a martyrdom by the clergy, and his fame in their chronicles far outshines that of Godfrey of Bouillon or of Richard the Lion-hearted.

King Philip was in the mean time pursuing his darling object, the humbling the power of the princes of England. He had already driven John from the west of France. That monarch, at variance with his barons, and at the same time excommunicated by the church, seemed an easy prey to Philip. The French king meditated the conquest of England. He leagued with the malcontents of that country, and formed a powerful

army for the purposes of invasion. John, to ward off the blow, not only became reconciled to the Roman see, but made himself and his kingdom feudatory to the pope. A papal legate immediately took John under his protection; and the French monarch, rather than risk a quarrel with the church, turned his armies towards Flanders, which he wasted and plundered impitiably, from hatred to its count. The emperor Otho, then in alliance with king John against France, came to the relief of the Flemings; and thus, for the first time since the accession of the new dynasty, the armies of France and Germany found themselves arrayed against each other in national hostility, each commanded by its respective monarch. The rival hosts met at Bouvines, in the month of August 1214. Twenty thousand combatants on either side, together with the presence of two monarchs, gave gravity and importance to the action. It was sharply contested. Wherever the armed knight met the comparatively defenceless burgess the latter was defeated; the militia of the commons had not yet acquired discipline and hardihood sufficient to compete with the iron-clad warriors of the aristocracy. It was thus the cavalry of Otho broke through a band of militia, and reaching king Philip, threw him from his horse, and would have killed him, but for the excellence of his armour and the devotion of several brave followers. The emperor Otho, on his side, encountered equal peril from the French knights, and escaped with difficulty from the field. The rebel counts of Boulogne and Flanders both were made prisoners. The army of Philip gained a complete victory. Bouvines was the first important battle of the monarchy; the first in which the king appeared in his place, at the head of his barons, leading them on to conquest. It materially increased the dignity and authority of the French king; whilst, to Philip Augustus personally, it brought not only its just meed of praise, but an exaggerated portion of renown.

The brilliant success of Bouvines seems to have contented and allayed the hitherto restless ambition of

Philip. In a year or two after, the barons of England, discontented with John, offered their crown to Louis, the son of Philip Augustus. The old monarch hesitated; he dreaded the anathema with which the pope threatened him, if he attacked his vassal, John of England. Prince Louis was obliged to undertake the expedition with but scanty aid from his parent. He was at first successful. Almost all England owned his sovereignty. The castle of Dover alone held out. But the death of John, which took place during the siege, and the proclaiming of his son, Henry III., soon obliged the French prince to abandon his claim and his conquests in England.

In the south, Philip Augustus showed himself equally dead to enterprise and lost in spirit. Amaury de Montfort, son of Simon, offered to cede to the king all his rights in Languedoc, which he was unable to defend against the old house of Toulouse. Philip hesitated to accept the important cession, and left the rival houses to the continuance of a struggle carried feebly on by either side. He at length expired, in 1223, after a reign of forty-three years. This period of half a century was one of uninterrupted progress to the French monarchy, and to its sovereign power. Though much of this was due to the age, to circumstances, and to the natural development of the country's political system, still much remains due to the personal character of Philip,—to his activity, his prudence, foresight, and courage. The mere list of the provinces which he subdued and united to the monarchy forms the fittest monument to his fame. These were Normandy, Maine, Anjou, Touraine, and Poitou, wrested from John; Picardy and Auvergne, won in the commencement of his reign; Artois, acquired by his marriage with Isabella of Hainault; and, finally, the influence over Languedoc which the crusaders brought him, and which nothing but Philip's age and declining strength prevented him from converting into sovereignty. In minor matters the active spirit of Philip Augustus equally displayed itself. He put the

police on an efficient footing; he walled and paved Paris and the principal towns under his sway; he built and fortified; he encouraged literature by the foundation of professorships; improved the discipline of the army; and, with all his enterprises and expenses, so ordered his finances as to leave a considerable treasure at his death.

When Louis VIII. succeeded his father Philip on the throne, it was remarked with joy by the lovers of legitimacy, that he was descended by his mother, Isabella of Hainault, from Charles of Lorraine, the last prince of Charlemagne's blood, and that he thus united the rights of Carlovingian and Capetian. He was feeble in person, and is said not to have been endowed with much capacity; but the sage policy of Philip Augustus, together with the impulse he had given to affairs, continued to direct them, and to render France triumphant over her enemies. Henry III. lost the towns of Niort and La Rochelle, and was driven by Louis from Poitou; yet so little did the English feel the loss of this province, that it is scarcely noticed by the historians of the island. The barons were so much occupied with jealousy of their sovereign and of his power, that Henry could procure or send no aid to his French provinces. A feeble expedition was at length fitted out, which preserved Gascony to England, but recovered no part of the lost province.

A singular cause of contention arose about this time in Flanders. Baldwin, its last count, had been one of the leaders of that crusade, which, in the commencement of the century, took Constantinople from the Greeks. He had been elected emperor of the East, and had been the first of the Latin dynasty which reigned over that city. Soon after, in the year 1205, he had been taken prisoner by the Bulgarians, and had not since been heard of. His daughter Jeanne succeeded to the county of Flanders, and had married Ferrand, who had opposed Philip Augustus, and who was taken prisoner by that monarch at the battle of Bouvines. Jeanne

took no steps to liberate her husband, or to pay his ransom, when an aged man appeared in Flanders, calling himself count Baldwin, and giving an account of his long captivity and recent escape from the Bulgarians. Jeanne denied the identity of this person with her father; Louis VIII. was of the same opinion; while Henry III. treated and allied with him as the veritable Baldwin. The self-entitled count appeared before king Louis at Peronne, offering proofs of his identity; but unfortunately he could not recall the place where he had done homage to Philip Augustus, nor the place where he had been knighted, nor yet the place and day of his marriage. Whether he really could not make answer to these questions, or whether age had troubled his memory, the old man was condemned as a pretender, and the countess Jeanne soon after caused him to be hanged. The common people still persisted in giving credit to his identity with count Baldwin, and looked on Jeanne as the murderer of her father. Henry III. in no way supported this his unfortunate ally.

The sovereignty over Languedoc was still undecided. King Louis was anxious to undertake a crusade in that country, with all the indulgences and advantages of a warlike pilgrimage to the Holy Land. The hostilities with England and the fickleness of the pope delayed the execution of this purpose. Both obstacles were removed at length. Amaury de Montfort being driven from the conquests of his father by the sons of count Raymond, re-animated the zeal of the pope and the old crusaders. Amaury retired to Paris, and made cession of his claims to king Louis, who, in return, promised him the office of constable. A new crusade was preached against the Albigenses; and Louis marched towards Languedoc at the head of a formidable army in the spring of the year 1226. The town of Avignon had proffered to the crusaders the facilities of crossing the Rhone under her walls, but refused entry within them to such an host. Louis, having arrived at Avignon, insisted on passing through the town: the Avignonais

shut their gates, and defied the monarch, who instantly formed the siege. One of the rich municipalities of the south was almost a match for the king of France. He was kept three months under its walls; his army a prey to famine, to disease, and to the assaults of a brave garrison. The crusaders lost twenty thousand men. The people of Avignon at length submitted, but on no dishonourable terms. This was the only resistance that Louis experienced in Languedoc. Raymond VII. dared not meet the crusaders in the field, nor durst one of his towns or châteaux remain faithful to him. All submitted. Louis retired from his facile conquest; he himself, and the chiefs of his army, stricken by an epidemy which had prevailed in the conquered regions. The monarch's feeble frame could not resist it: he expired at Montpensier in Auvergne, in November, 1226.

CHAP. III.

1226—1325.

FROM THE ACCESSION OF ST. LOUIS, TO THAT OF THE RACE OF VALOIS.

DURING the reign of the first Capetians the royal power was shown to be at its lowest ebb. With Louis the Fat it began to rise. One of the great feudatories, the duke of Normandy, a king himself, grew to rival and overshadow the monarch of France. In the struggle which ensued betwixt them, the lesser barons rallied to one side or the other; and came to acknowledge and be accustomed in the field to the supremacy of a master, which they were inclined to deny in their own castles and domains. The crusades, the rise of the commons, that of luxury, and many other circumstances, added still greater force to this cause of royal enhancement. And when Philip Augustus brought the war to a conclusion by the conquest of Normandy, he was not only triumphant over king John, but,—a victory of equal

importance,—he found himself paramount to all his powerful vassals, and in a condition to enforce his royal authority.

To strengthen and extend this authority was the continued and successful policy of Philip Augustus and his son. To consolidate and *legalise* it, was the task of St. Louis, who succeeded them. Philip, indeed, though he found the sword to be the most efficient sceptre, was not blind to the commodiousness of legal forms and judgments, as the instruments of his sovereign power. A decree, issued by a few attached barons in his court of peers, seemed to come from the aristocracy, not from him, and was therefore obeyed with less reluctance. The advantages of a judicial body that might act as arbiter betwixt the monarch and his nobles were acknowledged on both sides. The latter, seeing the members were of themselves, or of their class, saw in it a bulwark against despotism. The monarch, more crafty, found in it a power of a contrary tendency. The barons were too idle and too ignorant to suffice for the execution of their judicial functions; they had need of men of study and business to aid them. Legists were thus introduced into the parliament, and these soon engrossed all its authority and power. They became almost a fourth order in the state. Raised from the lower or middling classes, they were jealous of the aristocracy, and more so of the priesthood; and they laboured with inveterate diligence to raise royalty, to which they owed their own elevation and honours, on the ruins of those two estates. The ensuing hundred years of French history might be called the age of lawyers, so universally did they dominate and bend every power and institution to their will. It was their teachings and maxims that gave to kings that divine right which the church at that time claimed for itself. That devotion to royalty, which in romance is considered to have been the characteristic of the high-born, was in reality first held and forced upon them by the plebeian lawyer. This profession, which in later times has given to the cause of liberty its ablest advocates,

laid, in the thirteenth century, the firmest foundations of absolute power.

The French nobles were not yet reconciled to their new state of dependence and subordination. The present seemed a favourable opportunity for recovering their influence. Louis IX. had not reached the age of twelve. His mother, Blanche of Castile, assumed the regency. A woman and a minor did not seem formidable enemies; but Blanche was a person of capacity and firmness: all their efforts proved unavailing against her. Peter duke of Britany, surnamed Mauclerc, was the enemy that gave her most trouble. Theobald count of Champagne was another; a young knight of more gallantry than firmness. He professed a tender and chivalresque devotion towards queen Blanche, which some chroniclers have maliciously construed. And certainly his conduct was capricious as a lover—now rising in insurrection and anger, the next at the feet of the queen in abject submission, deserting Peter of Britany and his other allies. These civil wars led, however, to few important consequences. The termination of the war with the Albigenses, and the pacification, or it might be called the acquisition, of Languedoc, was the chief act of queen Blanche's regency.

Louis VIII. had over-run the country without resistance in his last campaign; still, at his departure, Raymond VII. again appeared, collected soldiers, and continued to struggle against the royal lieutenant. For upwards of two years he maintained himself; the attention of Blanche being occupied by the league of the barons against her. The successes of Raymond VII., accompanied by cruelties, awakened the vindictive zeal of the pope. Languedoc was threatened with another crusade; Raymond was willing to treat, and make considerable cessions, in order to avoid such extremities. In April, 1229, a treaty was signed: in it the rights of De Montfort were passed over. About two thirds of the domains of the count of Toulouse were ceded to the king of France; the remainder was to fall, after Raymond's death, to his daughter Jeanne, who by the same treaty

was to marry one of the royal princes: heirs failing them, it was to revert to the crown. On these terms, with the humiliating addition of a public penance, Raymond VII. once more was allowed peaceable possession of Toulouse, and of the part of his domains reserved to him. Alphonse, brother of Louis IX., married Jeanne of Toulouse soon after, and took the title of count of Poitiers; that province being ceded to him in apanage. Robert, another brother, was made count of Artois at the same time. Louis himself married Margaret, the eldest daughter of Raymond Berenger count of Provence. Though the king had nearly reached the age of one and twenty, still queen Blanche was not less strict in her tutelage. The young spouses were not allowed freely to enjoy each other's company, and many of their meetings were obliged to be stolen ones. Louis had been reared with almost monkish rigidity, not only in reverence of religion and performance of its duties, but in the whole conduct and views of life. Many dispositions might have rebelled against this irksome discipline, and compensated it by an unprincipled and licentious manhood. Louis IX., however, remained unchanged. The same rigid principle and sentiments, imbibed in childhood, continued to regulate his acts and life, and obtained for him the title of Saint Louis, by which he is more generally known.

The last of his barons that resisted the French king was Hugh of Lusignan count de la Marche. He had married Isabel, widow of king John of England, and mother of Henry III. When Louis accompanied his brother Alphonse to his county of Poitiers, and summoned his vassals of these regions to attend his court and do the customary homage, the dowager queen of England felt mortified at thus being reduced to act a subject's part. She instigated her husband to rebel; and the French princes, who had reached Poitiers in perfect confidence, were obliged to sign a disadvantageous treaty ere they were allowed to escape. The count de la Marche, elated by his success, formally renounced

his allegiance to Louis, formed a league of nobles, and called on Henry III., his step-son, to support him. That monarch did come with an army to his defence, whilst Louis advanced to chastise the refractory vassal. The two kings met on the banks of the Charente, at a castle called Taillebourg, which commanded a bridge over the river. Some negotiations went forward: and it appears that the English, afraid of being surprised or betrayed, abandoned the post in a panic and fled. They were pursued by Louis, on the following day, to Saintes. A battle ensued, in which Henry III. and the count de la Marche were defeated. The latter, as well as his proud wife, was compelled to submit to the conqueror. The count of Toulouse had also been engaged in this rebellion: he submitted in time, however; as did all the great vassals, on learning the victory of Saintes.

Another marriage completed for the royal family the acquisition of the south. A considerable portion of it obeyed Raymond Berenger, as count of Provence. He had no male heirs. Of his five daughters, the eldest was queen of France; another queen of England. Jealous of having his patrimonial country swallowed up in a great kingdom, Raymond Berenger, by testament, constituted his youngest daughter, Beatrix, his heir. It was arranged that she should espouse Raymond count of Toulouse, who would thus restore the fallen grandeur of his house, and unite all the south beneath his sway. These plans of Raymond were frustrated. Count Raymond Berenger died unexpectedly. Charles count of Anjou, Louis IX.'s youngest brother, became a suitor of Beatrix, and advanced with an army to woo. Louis seconded him. The Provençals, dreading more the enmity of France than that of the count of Toulouse, favoured the pretensions of the young prince; and Charles, with the hand of Beatrix, secured to himself the county of Provence.

Louis IX. was in the mean time diverted from plans of policy and domestic aggrandisement. In the year 1244, he fell seriously ill at Pontoise, and was reduced to the last extremity. Some of his attendants deemed

him already dead. He recovered, however; and his first words were a vow to take the cross and lead a crusade against the infidels. No entreaties could dissuade him from this resolve; and while yet on his bed of sickness he received the cross from the bishop of Paris. The events of the East were indeed such as to call for the sympathy and aid of all Christian knights. It was at this period that the Moguls had left the pasturages of Tartary, to over-run and spoil the nations of the West. They had invaded Muscovy, Poland, and had even penetrated into the dominions of the emperor Frederic. The Greek empire was equally menaced by them. The Khorasmians, a nation driven by the Moguls from the east of the Caspian, and fleeing from their conquerors, as the Goths from the Huns of old, flung themselves upon Syria. The Saracens and the Christians of Syria leagued against the barbarians; the crescent and the cross fought for the first time in alliance; it proved unfortunate. The Khorasmians defeated their opponents on the plain of Gaza. More ruthless than Saladin, they almost entirely destroyed the Knights Templars and Hospitallers, and massacred all the Christians of Jerusalem. Europe, during these reverses of her creed and sons, was convulsed with the quarrel betwixt pope Innocent and the emperor Frederic. The latter was most eager to fly to the relief of the Holy Land; but the pontiff, bent on his own selfish schemes, his own views, and the church's aggrandisement, was deaf to all offers and treaties of accommodation. He sought to draw Louis into his party against the emperor, and even undertook a journey to France for that purpose; when the illness and piety of the king bound him in a vow, which he resolved not to neglect, even for the exhortations or dispensations of the father of the faithful.

The mind of Louis was henceforth bent on the crusade, and the preparatives necessary. He made peace with Henry III., formed alliances with all neighbouring princes, and offered to restore any possessions that the

crown had usurped. He induced the greater number of his turbulent barons to accompany him; Peter of Britany amongst the rest, the count of Toulouse, and Thibaud count of Champagne, who, by inheritance, had become king of Navarre. Thibaud, or Theobald, had not long returned from an unfortunate crusade, which he had led into the East: with him went his vassal Joinville, the well known historian of St. Louis. The good king spared no pains to enlist followers; he had even recourse to artifice for that purpose, being necessitated to it by the decay of that devotional and chivalresque zeal which alone had furnished so many thousands to the early enterprises of the kind. At Christmas it was the custom of great lords to distribute new dresses to their followers; from whence comes the word *livrée*, livery. Louis prepared a great number; and inviting his courtiers to attend mass with him before daybreak, mantles were distributed to them previously. When day broke, and the sun's rays illumined the church, each person was surprised, on looking at his new mantle, to discover that the badge of the cross was attached. They were ashamed to tear off the sacred symbol, and thus found themselves tricked into the warlike pilgrimage by the devout humour of the monarch.

In August, 1248, Louis sailed from Aigues Mortes, a port that himself had founded. He directed his course to Cyprus, where Henry of Lusignan reigned,—and reached it in four and twenty days. The island was the general rendezvous of the crusade. Louis wintered there, collecting information, and forming plans for his future campaign.

Instead of disembarking in Palestine, Louis formed the project of attacking Egypt. The most powerful of the Saracen chiefs reigned at Cairo. Syria, to use a baronial expression, was in reality but a fief held under the soldan of Egypt. To attack the latter was to aim at the head, and to give the most deadly blow to Mahometan power. In June, 1249, the crusading force, filling 1800 vessels, mere boats we must suppose many

of them, bearing nearly 3000 knights, with their warlike and domestic suites, sailed from Cyprus. Their first misadventure was to be assailed by a tempest, and separated. Louis, however, arrived with a certain portion of the fleet off Damietta. There was a show of resistance. Many were against disembarking, but the French king would not remain on board; he sprang ashore, himself among the foremost, to withstand the charge of the Saracen cavalry, and routed them. Damietta was found to be evacuated, and was occupied on the following day.

The great object of the crusaders was the seizure of Cairo, the soldan's capital, styled Babylon by the monkish writers of the day. The rise of the Nile, however, kept them for many months inactive at Damietta. It was not until November that they began their march. The lassitude endured under that burning climate caused them to linger, and another month elapsed ere they reached Mansourah, not many leagues up the Nile. Here was a canal or river to cross, called the Thanis. The Saracens defended the passage; wooden fortifications were raised on both sides; but the crusaders suffered infinitely more than their enemies, from the Greek fire with which the latter assailed them. To the great joy of the French a ford was discovered. King Louis's brother, Robert count of Artois, passed it the next day. He took the Saracens by surprise, routed them, and in the heat of victory pursued them rashly into the town of Mansourah. Their chief was killed; but in the narrow streets and embarrassed passages the Egyptians rallied. The count of Artois, lord Salisbury, and Robert de Vere, who carried the banner of England, were here slain: the grand master of the Temple lost an eye. A thousand knights perished in the rout, amongst whom were almost all the English. After this defeat the project of advancing on Cairo was abandoned. To retreat was equally difficult. A pestilence seized on the army, and paralysed it. All that was left to the pious monarch to perform were his prayers.

The retreat to Damietta was commenced after Easter, but it was found impossible to accomplish it, so closely were they pressed. In a few days the army and its chief were prisoners. Every Christian under the rank of knighthood had to choose between apostasy or death. Such was the untoward consequence of a war undertaken for the propagation of religious belief.

Another circumstance came to complicate the king's disaster. The Mamelukes grew suddenly jealous of their young sultan. He favoured his French prisoners, and they suspected him of seeking to reserve their ransom to himself. They conspired, attacked him in a tower, and pursuing him thence into the Nile, where he had flung himself, massacred him before the eyes of the French. One of them tore out the victim's heart, and presented it to the king, asking a reward for having slain his enemy. This increased the difficulties of an accommodation; but it was at last effected. Louis restored Damietta as the price of his own ransom, promised 400,000 livres as that of his followers: the count of Poitiers remained hostage for the fulfilment. A truce was agreed on for ten years.

Louis, after his delivery, sailed for Palestine, determined to see his barons free ere he quitted the Levant. The obligation of his vow held him also, perhaps, as well as the shame of returning with the news of so disastrous an expedition. Four years Louis sojourned in Palestine, endeavouring to effect by policy that which he had failed to accomplish by arms. He fortified Acre, Sidon, Jaffa, and other principal towns held by the Latins. He negotiated with the Arabs, and laboured to reconcile the differences betwixt the chiefs of Syria. At length, on learning the death of his mother, queen Blanche, who had been regent in his absence, he sailed from Palestine, arriving in France during the autumn of the year 1254. It was remarked, that amidst all the joy and congratulations of his return, Louis preserved the aspect of profound melancholy; he would not admit of consolation, listen to music or to gaiety. He still retained on

his habit the symbol of a crusader; thus marking that he considered his vow as unaccomplished. He reproached himself with the ill success of his expedition, as with a crime.

The love and respect borne by his people to Louis were not diminished by his reverses; on the contrary, his captivity excited general sympathy. The ardour to avenge his indignities upon the infidel was general. The devout opinions of that age, which saw the immediate hand of Providence in every event, — distributing good fortune as the reward of piety, and disaster as the punishment of infidelity, — at once attributed the failure of the crusade to the profligate lives of the barons and clergy. Both were considered unworthy to advance the cause of heaven. It was for the innocent and the humble, for those untainted with the vices of the time, — luxury, avarice, violence, and pride, — to come forth and support the standard which they did not disgrace. The same idea had formerly prevailed, when many thousands of children were collected in a kind of crusading expedition, and perished miserably. Shepherds were now the class looked to as the fittest to recruit a divine army. Numbers of these assembled, and were joined by the poor and idle of all kinds.

Their first purpose was to combat the infidel and rescue Louis. But the *Pastoureaux*, as they were called, soon abandoned the conquest of the Saracen for the plunder and abuse of their betters at home. Their fanaticism naturally adopted the popular tone of hatred to the clergy, and distaste of their creed and yoke, which has ever existed — a smouldering fire, always quenched with blood, at least in France, though never to utter extinction. Whenever the people rose by insurrection to enjoy the free utterance of their opinions, these were found to resemble the religious and political heresies of the unfortunate Albigenses. By the measures of queen Blanche, the Pastoureaux were exterminated, and their chief slain as he was preaching publicly in the capital.

The death of Raymond count of Toulouse was another

event that took place during the absence of Louis. The king's brother Alphonse, who had married Jeanne, succeeded to the peaceable possession and dignity of the counts of Toulouse. Thus two of the royal princes divided the south betwixt them: Charles of Anjou possessing Provence, or the eastern portion bordering on the Rhone; Alphonso the western. They united their forces in a war against the free cities of their region. Avignon was reduced, and Arles; Marseilles itself submitted: but it does not appear that any were harshly treated, or deprived of their privileges and franchises.

The remainder of St. Louis's reign is marked by few incidents, although it forms the most important epoch in the legislative history of France. The monarch, as he advanced in years, became still more absorbed in religious views and scruples. He came to have no other maxim of policy than the preservation of his own soul, and that of his fellow men. He consulted his conscience rather than his ministers, and preferred its counsels to those even of prudence, or of patriotism. Such unworldly policy was likely to lead to most foolish acts. He had promised, on setting out for the crusade, to restore all that the kings of France had usurped.—Henry III. of England claimed Normandy and Poitou in accomplishment of the offer, and Louis for a moment meditated ceding them: but the impolicy of the act struck him, as well as its justice. He could not reconcile his duties as Christian and as sovereign; he determined in consequence to abdicate the throne, and to enter a cloister. It was with difficulty he was dissuaded from the resolve, and brought to reign according to less rigid maxims of political honesty. He made peace, however, with Henry, and ceded to him the provinces of Perigord, the Limousin, the Agenois, and a part of Saintonges. In return Henry abandoned his right to Normandy and Poitou.

The good sense of Louis in this instance overcame the absurdity of monastic notions, and prevailed over the narrow precepts of his conscience and confessor. His views

enlarged; they opened to the wide prospects of philanthropy; and in lieu of confining himself to the observance of ascetic, I had nearly said of selfish duties, the monarch gave himself to the more noble task of ameliorating the condition of his people. The *établissemens* of St. Louis, as his laws are called, form the earliest considerable attempt at legislation in France. The first of them was directed against the right of private war, asserted and practised by the barons. It established, after the commission of any crime or act of violence, forty days of truce to be observed towards the relatives and friends of the criminal. This obliged the retaliation or vengeance to be personally confined to the offender, and not, as usual, extended to his kin and clan. This ordinance, known by the name of *quarantaine le roi*, was succeeded by the total abolition of the right of private war. Subsequent monarchs, however, unable to enforce the latter prohibitions, were content with upholding the former. The duel, or judicial combat, was another relic of barbarism and violence that St. Louis attacked by his enactments. The legists, his new counsellors, the modern lords of parliament and of the judicature, evidently dictated these ameliorations. Versed in the pandects and the Roman law, the licence and independence of feudal customs were odious to them. They swept all these away, substituting for intricate rights and turbulent privileges their own processes and verdicts. St. Louis has been lauded and censured for having, through them, undermined the power of the aristocracy, and for having converted a government, originally feudal and free, into an absolute monarchy. But Louis, with all his sagacity, saw not whither his enactments tended. He issued them more from a love of order, and from principles of piety, than from any Machiavelian craft or kingly policy. Even his legal counsellors may share this exculpation. They did but labour in the spirit of their calling. What most detracted from the influence of the barons was not the object of an express law. This was, drawing away the trying of causes from them and

their courts to those of the royal judges and the parliament. It was effected tacitly and gradually. Appeals were encouraged; cases in which they were allowed were extended and multiplied; and the lower and middling orders were taught to look to their sovereign for that impartial justice and protection, which they could not expect from the very noble with whom they were perhaps in litigation.

Another of the enactments of Louis showed, what was still less to be expected of him, his resistance to the usurpation and pernicious immunities of the church. Here the hand of the legists is clearly seen, defending their jurisdiction against that of the clergy, and declaring their law and its royal source independent of the Holy See, its canons and decretals. In the year 1268, was published an edict called the Pragmatic Sanction, which is considered as the foundation of the liberties of the Gallican church. This declares the right of collators to benefices, of cathedral churches, and of such as enjoyed the privilege of electing their superior, to be independent of the pope; that all church preferment and promotion shall be guided by ancient custom, despite of any modern decree issuing from Rome. It restricts in the same manner the money levied in the kingdom for the papal treasury. The words of the edict are simple enough, and moderate; but in the reading, the French legists afterwards took care to construe it so as to oppose and frustrate every attempt at exaction or usurpation on the part of the Holy See. It is singular that the most formidable bulwark against the grasping pretensions of the popedom, should have been raised by the only monarch of Christendom whose virtues and piety have placed him on the saintly calendar.

England and France, those restless neighbours, remained at peace during these years. Henry III. was engaged in a struggle with his barons, headed by Simon de Montfort earl of Leicester, a descendant of the conqueror of the Albigenses. Louis IX. never took advantage of the weakness of the rival kingdom or monarch, and

did not interfere except with his good offices. In 1264, both parties referred their cause to his arbitration. The king held his court at Amiens for the purpose, and patiently heard the pleas on both sides. With all his sense of justice, it was not, however, to be hoped that a monarch could give an impartial verdict in a cause where monarchy and liberty were at issue. Louis decided against the English barons, ordering, that all his castles and powers should be restored to Henry. This "equitable sentence," as Hume calls it, was not submitted to by the barons; and the civil war in England was in no wise allayed or terminated by Louis's arbitration.

About the period of the king's departure for the crusade, Italy and Germany were convulsed by the deadly quarrel between the pope and the emperor Frederic II. This monarch died soon after at Ferentino. The pope's enmity was continued against his son Conrad, who died suddenly in 1254, poisoned, as some suppose. He left a son, Conradin, then but three years of age, the last relic of the house of Suabia. Manfred, the natural son of Frederic, held possession of Naples, and defied all the efforts of the pope to drive him thence. Innocent IV. had promised Naples to a prince of Parma, if he succeeded in subduing Manfred. Alexander IV., his successor, transferred this promise to Edmund, second son of Henry III., who contributed all the money he could raise to the conquest of a new kingdom, at a time when he could scarcely retain the one over which he reigned. Manfred, however, was still successful; and the pope felt the necessity of raising up a more powerful competitor. He despatched an envoy, offering the kingdom of Naples to St. Louis. The good king would not consent to usurp the right of the young Conradin; but when his brother, Charles of Anjou, whose ambition was not contented with the country of Provence, lately acquired by him in marriage, offered himself as the conqueror and sovereign of Naples, Louis would not interfere. He left Charles to act with his own resources;

and this prince formed a treaty with the pope to the effect proposed. A crusade, the usual pontifical resource, was preached against Manfred; and a large French army marched under the united banners of the cross and of Charles to the conquest of Naples. Manfred, at the head of his troops, a great number of whom were Saracens, met his rival in the plain of Grandella. One battle decided the war. Manfred bravely perished in the field: Charles of Anjou and the French remained masters of Sicily and Naples. Such was the commencement of those conquests in Italy, which continued so long the object of French ambition, and of which the first brilliant results were always doomed to end in subsequent disappointment and defeat.

While Christians, calling themselves crusaders, and so constituted by the pontiff, were thus engaged in slaughtering their brethren, tidings arrived that Palestine had been invaded by the soldan of Egypt; that Cesarea, and, at last, Antioch itself, had fallen. Upwards of 100,000 Christians had been put to the sword, or sold to slavery. Europe was thus periodically frighted from apathy, and roused to enthusiam and vengeance, by some fearful calamity in the East. Louis IX. was deeply moved; and, despite of his feebleness and age, instantly undertook to lead another crusade. His relatives and nobles, even the pope himself, endeavoured to dissuade him; but to no purpose. He employed three years in preparation. It was in this interval that Naples was invaded by young Conradin, the last prince of the house of Suabia. Charles of Anjou advanced to defend his newly-acquired kingdom, and defeated his rival in battle. Conradin was taken, and instantly sent by his ruthless conqueror to perish on the scaffold.

St. Louis embarked with his three sons and a considerable army at Aigues Mortes, in July, 1270. Palestine or Egypt was considered to be the object of the expedition. The king surprised his followers by declaring his intention of disembarking at Tunis. The pious king's object was said to be, the assurances he had

received of the willingness of the king of Tunis to become Christian. Charles of Anjou had also an object in conquering that district of Africa, which was immediately opposite to his kingdom of Sicily. Whatever was the expectation, it was not fulfilled. Omar king of Tunis, instead of welcoming Louis as an apostle, prepared to oppose him as an invader. The French effected a landing, however, and in a few days attacked and took what is called the castle of Carthage. The ancient rival of Rome still existed as a town, and was defended by two hundred men. Louis established himself within its walls, and was soon besieged there by the Tunisians. The plague, a more formidable enemy than man, at the same time attacked the French. Numbers of the chiefs of the expedition fell immediate victims to it. The king and his sons caught the infection. One of the latter, the count of Nevers, died. Louis lay twenty-two days extended on his couch of death, displaying that patience, piety, and presence of mind, which have given him in history the mingled character of a great man and a saint. In his dying moments he caused himself to be removed from his couch and placed upon ashes. In this situation he expired.

The character of St. Louis is one of the noblest that occurs in modern history. He possessed all the virtues of his age, untarnished by its vices: he was brave without cruelty or violence, pious without bigotry or weakness. Although more the hero of the legend than of romance, he commands our admiration by his rare disinterestedness, his bold attempt to rule his actions as a monarch by the rigid maxims of private honour, and by the great good sense that tempered his devotion, and that never allowed him to sacrifice humanity or justice to the interests even of that church which he revered. There was one defect in his character, however, rendered more striking when we compare him with another saint and hero, Charlemagne *:

* The fact of Thomas Aquinas dining and being familiar with Louis is scarcely in contradiction to this censure.

this was his neglect of letters; shown not only by the silence of history as to his reading and acquirements, but by the fact that the education of his son and successor Philip was utterly neglected. Even his monkish contemporaries found the ignorance of the prince "lamentable," and his reign corroborates the assertion.

Robert, the youngest son of St. Louis, was count of Clermont; he married the heiress of the county of Bourbon, and took that title. Although disordered in his intellect from a blow received at a tournament, he left a numerous progeny. His descendants succeeded to the throne of France, which they still occupy, in the person of Henry IV.

Philip III. or the Hardy, called so apparently from no other cause than that of having survived the war and pestilence of Tunis, was still sick when St. Louis expired. The conduct of the army devolved on Charles of Anjou, who by a treaty put an end to the war. Philip journeyed through Italy accompanied by five coffins, — those of his father, brother, brother-in-law, wife, and son. It was during this journey that Henry, nephew of Henry III. of England, was assassinated by Guy de Montfort in the church of Viterbo.

The principal, almost the only, events of the reign of Philip the Hardy sprung from the rivalry of the royal families of France and Aragon: that of Castile also mingled in the quarrel; but all the circumstances are far too minute and unimportant to be given. The succession of the counts of Champagne to the crown of Navarre has been mentioned. Henry the last king left a daughter, who, as heiress of that powerful house, was sought by many competitors; amongst others, by the prince of Aragon. As yet but a child, her mother fled with her to the court of France, where being brought up, she was afterwards married to Philip the Hardy's son, and thus brought her rich heritage to swell that of the French crown. The king of Aragon was of course wroth at this abduction; and other causes contributed to aggravate his enmity. France, however, was not the

most vulnerable point for attacking the French. The followers of Charles of Anjou, since their conquest of Sicily and Naples, had conducted themselves so as to excite the discontent and hatred of a vindictive people. Peter of Aragon received the Sicilian exiles with the greatest friendship; amongst the rest, John of Procida, their chief. He incited these malcontents to avenge themselves, and promised them his support. John of Procida passed over to Sicily, where, in the disguise of a Franciscan friar, he prepared measures of revolt and vengeance. On Easter day, 1282, when the church bells sounded for vespers at Palermo, the Sicilians rushed on all the French they could meet, and massacred them with every aggravation of cruelty. The same scene was imitated and repeated all through the island. Eight thousand French are said to have perished in this massacre, well known by the name of the *Sicilian vespers*. Peter of Aragon soon after arrived in Sicily with a fleet and army. Charles, who had hurried from Naples to avenge his countrymen, was compelled to retreat with the loss of his fleet; and Sicily was not only lost to the house of Anjou, but the Aragonese began to pass the strait and to establish themselves in Calabria. The anger of the two competitors was not satisfied in the field; they exchanged insults and defiances, and challenged each other to single combat. Bordeaux was fixed as the rendezvous, and Edward I., a neutral monarch, was to guard the field, and guarantee the princely duellists from unfair advantage. This chivalresque mode of settling their differences never took effect; Edward refused to sanction it: and although Charles of Anjou made his appearance at the time and place appointed, Peter came but to enter his protest and instantly disappear.

Philip the Hardy took up the quarrel of his uncle Charles. He made immense preparations, resolving to overwhelm his enemy, and entered Spain with a numerous army. He advanced, however, no farther than Gerona, which he took, and thence was compelled to

retreat. A fever, the consequence of disappointment and fatigue, seized upon Philip, and he expired at Perpignan, in October, 1285. The rival princes, Charles of Anjou and Peter of Aragon, died the same year.

Little is known of the internal state of France or of its court during the reign of Philip. From Matthew Paris and Joinville to Froissart, there is a breach in the succession of chroniclers ill filled up by the dry pages of William of Nangis. History had, in fact, outgrown its ancient scope. Provinces were lost in kingdoms; barons and counts in royalty: wars, from provincial quarrels, became national ones. To comprehend this wide field, and follow the march of such events, became impossible for a monk; the information of the cloister no longer sufficed: history henceforward demanded the pen of the statesman or the warrior; and such were not always found, possessed of the leisure and the learning requisite for the task.

There is, nevertheless, one domestic circumstance of Philip's reign preserved to us. It seems that he honoured with his peculiar favour Pierre de la Brosse, a chirurgeon-barber of St. Louis, who became chamberlain to the king. The ignoble favourite was of course the object of hatred and jealousy to the court, and to the queen also, who endeavoured to counteract his influence. Pierre de la Brosse made use on his side of insinuations against the queen; and the king's eldest son Louis dying somewhat suddenly, poison was whispered to be the cause. Pierre de la Brosse was the origin of the report that the queen sought to remove her step-sons, in order to make room for her own. His boldness or his malevolence,— which, cannot be decided,— proved fatal to the favourite: he was tried by a commission, and hanged on the common gibbet at Montfaucon.

Philip the Fair, the fourth monarch of his name, succeeded at the age of seventeen to the vacant throne. The retreat and disasters of the French army might, at any other time, have proved most fatal to the monarchy; but neighbouring kingdoms were not then actuated by

any rivalry towards France. Rodolph of Hapsburg, the ancestor of the present house of Austria, lately called by his merits from the humble station of a private knight to the imperial crown, was busied with establishing his power and family in the east of Germany. Edward I. of England, though he showed himself ambitious and usurping towards the Welsh and Scotch, preserved towards France a kind of paternal forbearance and protection. Instead of taking advantage of Philip's youth or misfortunes, he came to Paris to do him homage, proffered his services as arbitrator to settle the differences betwixt France and Aragon, and sincerely laboured to bring about a peace. The causes of quarrel were complicated, and rendered adjustment so difficult, that ten years elapsed before a final treaty was concluded. Charles II. of Naples, son of Charles of Anjou, was a prisoner to the king of Aragon. Edward induced the latter to release him on divers conditions, which, though sworn to solemnly, were of course broken. War continued, in the mean time, languidly. In conclusion, Sicily was nominally restored by treaty to the house of Anjou, but really kept possession of by Frederic of Aragon, brother of the reigning monarch. Charles of Naples at the same time ceded his county of Anjou to Charles of Valois, king Philip's brother, contenting himself with Provence and Naples.

Philip the Fair very much resembled his ancestor Philip Augustus in character. Both having succeeded young to the throne, entertained a high idea of their prerogative; and hence were proud, irritable, overbearing, rapacious. Both added craft to violence; and whilst they overwhelmed inferiors, they spoiled and cheated the more powerful by artifice and falsehood. The two monarchs made use of law as their favourite weapon: lawyers were the chief counsellors and ministers of Philip the Fair. Philip Augustus redeemed his habits of crooked policy by valour in the field: the victory won by him at Bovines procured for him the name of hero. Philip the Fair was not so successful;

his propensities were those of the statesman rather than of the warrior.

Notwithstanding the friendly and disinterested conduct of Edward I. towards France, Philip was jealous of that monarch. He saw with pain that Edward was rounding and completing his dominions at home, by the conquest of Scotland and of Wales. The French king sought to follow the example; and he accordingly laboured and intrigued to win the affections of Edward's subjects of Guienne. Thirty-five years of peace had now existed betwixt England and France; but points of rivalry, casual insults, and collisions, could not fail to keep alive and stir up, from time to time, the natural jealousy of neighbours and rivals. For some of these causes, true or pretended, Philip summoned Edward to appear and answer before the parliament of Paris. The latter, occupied with the Scotch war, replied more in a tone of expostulation than of anger. He sent his brother Edmund to Paris to satisfy these griefs. The politic Philip pretended to be grievously insulted and hurt in his feudal rights by the insults he had received from the people of Guienne; his honour was piqued, as he affected, more than his interest was concerned. He demanded that one or two of his officers should be admitted, with merely nominal power, into the chief towns of that duchy. It was at the same time proposed, that Edward should marry Margaret, Philip's sister, and that Guienne should be the heritage of the offspring of the marriage. Edward, who sagely valued such a province as Scotland or Wales far more than those continental ones, which he was reduced to hold in fief, agreed to these conditions; and, in drawing up the stipulations, was not keen enough in mistrusting the legal counsellors of Philip. The consequence was, that missives were issued for delivering up the chief towns of Guienne to the French; who were no sooner in possession of them, than Philip threw off the mask, and, instead of fulfilling the conditions of the treaty, summoned Edward afresh to appear before his parliament of Paris. War remained

as the only alternative: but it was languidly carried on. Edward was engaged at home with Baliol and Bruce. The monarch and barons of England had ceased, in a great measure, to be French. It was on this occasion that, on Edward's ordering the earl of Hereford to Guienne, he added, seeing the earl's reluctance, "Sir earl, by God, you shall either go or hang!" and Hereford replied, "By God, sir king! I will neither go nor hang." It had been well for England, if her future monarchs and nobles had persevered in that disregard of foreign possessions which marked Edward's conduct as well as Hereford's. Still the former was not pusillanimous enough to abandon his rights: he excited continental princes against Philip, whilst he devoted himself to the pursuit of his advantageous and peculiar policy at home.

One of Edward's projects was to obtain Philippa, daughter of Guy de Dampierre count of Flanders, for his son; a large dowry, Flanders being then the richest country in Europe, and a powerful ally would thus be gained. But Philip intervened with his wonted craft: he sent word to the count of Flanders, that he should feel insulted unless Philippa visited Paris on her way to London; expressing, at the same time, no objection to the match. When the daughter of the count of Flanders, however, arrived in obedience to the monarch's invitation, she was immediately conducted to prison; and the English prince was thus baulked of his bride. The count renounced his allegiance in consequence; but Philip, invading Flanders with an army, compelled him to submit. Finally, he was made prisoner, and the county of Flanders annexed for the time to the crown. Philip had leagued with the Scotch, and Edward with the Flemish; but both monarchs abandoned their allies respectively to each other.

Whilst Philip made princes and nobles feel the weight of his injustice, he was no less oppressive to the commonalty from his exactions. Two Florentines, whom he consulted and trusted as financiers, brought to the royal employ the arts of private cunning and experience.

All foreign merchants were seized in one day, terrified into paying a large fine, and then banished the kingdom. The Jews were similarly treated. The contributions levied on the towns or *communes*, in which all wealth now began to concentrate, were swelled by every possible expedient. This, though a source of great oppression, might have proved the commencement of public liberty. The burgesses or *tiers état* were called to assemble, in order to give their consent to new taxes. The same custom began in England about the very same time: with what different fate and consequences the institution was attended in the different kingdoms, is known to every one. The towns of Flanders were far more advanced than those of France in wealth and independence; they were turbulent and jealous under their counts; and Philip was welcomed at Bruges and Ghent as a deliverer. But when the French monarch, or his lieutenant, commenced in his new province the system of exaction and violence practised in France, the Flemish rebelled, all the French were massacred at Bruges, and a grandson of the captive count was called to head the insurgents. Robert d'Artois marched with the army of Philip to chastise them. The Flemings posted themselves at Courtray, behind a canal. The impetuosity of the French did not allow them to reconnoitre; they charged into the canal; and in the confusion that ensued, were put to the rout and slaughtered by the Flemings. Robert d'Artois himself, and many of the first nobles of France, perished in the action. This defeat punished Philip, and took from him all the advantages of his mean policy. Bordeaux rebelled; he was obliged to make peace with England, and restore Aquitaine to Edward. A serious quarrel with the pope at the same time came to occupy and trouble him. He afterwards gained two battles over the Flemings; but the populous and stubborn province instantly opposed a fresh army to Philip. The artizans of Ghent, Bruges, Ypres, and the other towns, abandoned their callings, "to die in battle," as they vowed, "rather than live in servitude." The

French king, thus convinced of the impracticability of subduing the Flemings, granted them peace, liberating and acknowledging the son of Guy de Dampierre as count of Flanders. The river Lys was declared the boundary of France and Flanders.

The most inveterate enemy of Philip was pope Boniface VIII., Cajetan by name. Pontiff and monarch were equally haughty, irritable, and possessed with high ideas of their sovereign power. A tenth that Philip raised on his clergy without the pope's consent, and a refusal of the French king to abide by the arbitration of Boniface betwixt him and England, were the first causes of rupture. The pope sent a French bishop as legate to expostulate; the bishop took the opportunity to insult his sovereign. Philip in revenge ordered his lawyers to indict the bishop; and crimes were soon raked up wherewith to accuse him: heresy, sorcery, atheism, those vague crimes so easily imputed and so difficultly proved,—were instantly laid to the prelate's charge. He was arrested and imprisoned to answer it. The pope was wroth, and menaced the king with excommunication. The latter called a council, and commanded his lawyer favourites to accuse the pope as they had accused the bishop; and immediately the same charges of heresy and infidelity were brought against the pontiff. But it was difficult to bring the head of the church before a tribunal of Philip's choosing, or to hope to have him condemned upon such a mendacious and impudent accusation. The king, therefore, employed one of his agents, also a man of law, to excite a conspiracy against the pope. He united with the Colonnas, levied an armed troop, and surprised Boniface at his country retreat in Anagni. Making themselves masters of his guards and person, they bound, insulted, and menaced him. The pontiff bared his neck to their swords, but they feared to strike; and even found that to bring him away captive was impracticable. At length a body of the faithful subjects of Boniface rose and delivered him from the conspirators. The vengeance of Philip was

complete, however, despite of this rescue. Boniface died soon after of a fever caused by the indignities, the hunger, and privations he had suffered.

The events of the reign of Philip the Fair form but a series of acts of injustice. He was called the *Faux Monnoyeur*, or falsifier of coin, from his continual tampering with the standard. He frequently ordered the coin and plate of his subjects to be brought to his mint, and paid for it in new coin so much debased, that the marc of silver, from being worth only two livres fifteen sous, came to be worth eight francs eight sous of the debased coin. When the king's purpose was answered, and his engagements discharged, he decried his own coin. This caused an insurrection in Paris: the mob attacked the palace of the Temple, where the king lodged, and menaced his person. But the police had been too well regulated! the royal archers and sergeants dispersed the mob, seized the ringleaders, and hung them to the trees in and around the capital.

Resentment had carried Philip the Fair, in his attack upon pope Boniface, far beyond the bounds of prudence. He dreaded the retaliation and just enmity of a succeeding pontiff, and laboured with all his might to bring about an election favourable to France. The king's crime was, however, viewed with too much horror in Italy. Benedict XI. was elected pope; and he prepared to excommunicate those who had attacked Boniface at Anagni. Philip took the alarm, and pope Benedict was opportunely destroyed by poison administered in a plate of figs. A new conclave was summoned, in which the two parties were found to be equally balanced in numbers, as well as in violence and hate. They remained confined, as is the custom until a pope is chosen. Nine months elapsed without hope of agreement. At length it was arranged that the anti-gallican party should choose three prelates, and that the opposite side was to select one of the three. Three prelates, noted enemies to Philip, were designated. Information of this was despatched to the French monarch. Amongst

the three was Bertrand de Goth, archbishop of Bordeaux: he was immediately sent for by Philip, who showed him that he was master of the election, and could ensure the elevation of the archbishop, provided the latter would become his partisan. Bertrand de Goth grasped at the high offer, and refused no terms: he promised to fulfil five demands that the king made of him, amongst which one was to condemn the memory of Boniface and exculpate his assaulters; and another to grant a sixth, which Philip reserved the liberty of thereafter specifying. Bertrand de Goth became pope Clement V. in consequence of this intrigue. To be near his patron Philip, he fixed the pontifical court first at Poitiers, and finally at Avignon.

No monarch was more successful or more ruthless in his revenge than Philip the Fair. His most signal act of this kind was the destruction of the order of Knights Templars. History does not inform us of the origin of the monarch's hatred towards this body; — avarice, the cause generally assigned, is not sufficient. But there was a rage at that time for judicial processes; it was the fearful amusement of the age, as judicial combat and tournament had been in more warlike periods. Philip and his lawyers could not rest without some great criminal prosecution, some mysterious inquest. His object in seizing pope Boniface had been to drag him before a council, to accuse, and judge him. The monarch and his counsellors were disappointed in this; and they singled out the Templars, against whom some vague charges of scandal gave sufficient plea. When the Templars were despatched, Philip, having no living antagonist to accuse, attacked the dead Boniface with his lawyers and pleadings.

On the 13th of October, 1307, the Templars were seized in all parts of France; the grand master and sixty knights in Paris: they were thrown into prison, and all the possessions of the order confiscated. The most abominable charges were brought against them; — those of committing the most indecent of crimes, of

worshipping a head, spitting on the cross, and avowing infidelity. Torturing the accused, and promising him pardon if he confessed, were the chief and only modes of proof. Many, in order to escape torment, confessed what their torturers put into their mouths; and these avowals were considered conclusive of their guilt. Fifty-nine Templars were burnt in Paris; a proportional number in the provinces. Clement V., in obedience to Philip, abolished the order.

It is here melancholy to reflect, that the cruel and sanguinary spirit of barbarism, which the natural progress of civilisation had been softening from the tenth to the thirteenth century, should during the latter period have been re-awakened by the agency of two principles most averse from violence or blood — these are religion and law. The church, by its persecutions and burnings of the Albigenses and other heretics* — lawyers, by their adopting the torture and other legal customs of the inquisition, as well as by their blind servility to royal power, accustomed the people to see blood shed juridically for trifling or for no causes. The great, for the same reason, came to have still less respect for human life. He who dared to be the foe or the opponent of a prince expiated his crime, for such it was considered, with death. The observance of certain forms of justice seemed to give full excuse for dispensing with the spirit. The three following centuries of blind law and religious bigotry surpass the times of Brunehaut or Domitian in bloodshed and violence. Murders and assassinations, hitherto rare, begin to thicken on us, and the pages of history become for a long period disgustingly smeared with blood.

The last important act of Philip was his annexing the town of Lyons to the kingdom of France. The emperor was the nominal sovereign, the archbishop the actual ruler. Philip interfered betwixt the latter and the townspeople, and usurped the sovereignty of the town, then, as now, the second of the kingdom in importance.

* John XXII. burned hundreds of both sexes for the crime of professing absolute poverty.

When the venerable James de Molay, grand master of the Temple, was brought to execution, he was said to have uttered, amidst protestations of his innocence, a solemn summons to his chief accusers, king Philip and pope Clement, to appear before the throne of the Almighty, one in forty days, the other in the space of a year and a day. They died within these periods respectively. Philip expired at Fontainebleau in November, 1314.

Notwithstanding the cruel and crafty character which the acts of his reign stamp upon Philip the Fair, still much that is beneficial owes its origin to him. The parliament, a court of judicature, was established and fixed at Paris: personal servitude was abolished by a decree; serfs attached to the soil existed, it seems, up to this period, in Languedoc. Philip the Fair is generally considered the founder of the *états généraux*, or states-general, an assembly corresponding to the English parliament. He called them together when preparing to resist pope Boniface, and caused each estate to answer the papal bull, denying the pope's right of supremacy or interference. He favoured the burgesses of towns, whom he found at once wealthy and submissive,—two qualities that his nobles wanted; and his frequent summonses established the commons as a third estate.

Philip chose his ministers from the lower or middling classes; selecting those versed in law, the new and chosen science of the day. The management of the royal revenues had hitherto appertained to the office of chamberlain. Philip appointed a superintendent of finance in the person of Enguerrand de Marigny. The circumstance marks an important change: Of old, kings lived, like other nobles, on the produce of their domains, stewards and bailiffs were their most useful officers; the barons contributed to the support of the state by military service: but now money had come to supersede service of all kinds. Money was demanded, in lieu of produce, for rent: money was demanded to carry on war, rather than knights and men at arms. To raise money thus continually, and for all purposes, was an

anomaly in the feudal system. It had made no provision for a yearly budget; and hence the financial measures of the monarchs of the time consisted either in extortion, or in an appeal to the generosity of their subjects.

Philip the Fair left three sons, all of whom reigned in succession. The eldest was Louis, surnamed Hutin from his disorderly youth. His reign of two years is almost unmarked by events. Charles count of Valois, brother of Philip, held the chief influence over his nephew. He employed it to destroy Enguerrand de Marigny, minister of Philip the Fair, whom he accused of malversation and sorcery, and whom he caused to be hanged upon the common gibbet. Louis led an army against the Flemings, but was obliged to disband it without a single action or conquest. The three sons of Philip were unfortunate in their wives. It was discovered that all three had been guilty of adultery. The three princesses were imprisoned, and their paramours delivered to torture and death. The wife of Louis was strangled by his order, to make way for another marriage. Louis himself died in June, 1316, of a disease caught by having descended to a cellar to drink wine when heated by a game at ball.

Philip, the next brother, instantly took possession of the palace. The lately married queen, however, now a widow, announced herself with child, and Philip was obliged to content himself with the title of regent. It was agreed that he should govern for the infant about to be born, should it prove a prince; if birth was given to a princess, Philip was to assume the crown. The queen brought forth a son, which died soon after, and is known in the list of French monarchs as John I. Louis Hutin had left a daughter; nevertheless her rights were passed over. Philip made a compromise with his uncle, the duke of Burgundy, and caused himself to be crowned king. This is the first instance of the crown descending to the exclusion of females, by what is called the salic law. This maxim was by no means previously established, known, or understood. Chance, the mature

age of Philip, the friendless state of the daughter of Louis, together with the circumstance of her mother's infidelity, were the true origin of a rule so unique and important. The salic law was confirmed by a decree of the states-general, which the new king summoned for the purpose. The circumstances attending the succession of Philip the Long are the only important ones of his reign. He died in January, 1322.

Philip left daughters, but no son. In obedience to the salic law, that he had himself established, his daughters were set aside, and Charles IV., or the Fair, the third son of Philip the Fair, succeeded to his brethren. His reign of six years is equally a blank, marked only by the expedition of queen Isabella of England and her son against the unfortunate Edward II. Charles had no offspring. Of the fine family left by Philip the Fair there remained not a male descendant. The people considered this extinction of his race as a punishment for the crimes of that monarch. Charles the Fair died in the commencement of 1328, leaving his queen in a state to produce an heir. "Should it be a son," ordered the dying Charles, "let Philip count of Valois, my cousin-german, be his tutor and the kingdom's regent. If it be a daughter, let the twelve peers and barons of France decide to whom the kingdom shall belong."

CHAP. IV.

1328—1461.

FROM THE ACCESSION OF PHILIP OF VALOIS TO THAT OF LOUIS XI.

THE thirteenth century was in Europe a period of comparative repose. Each nation was for the most part occupied at home, reconciling discordant interests, struggling to form some kind of system, and developing the natural resources of commerce and industry. In France the royal power obtained ascendancy over its rivals, repressing the great feudatories, putting the yoke of its

legal authority over the necks of all, balancing the power of the nobility in the mass, by calling the commons into political existence, and securing the co-operation of the clergy in resisting the encroaching power of Rome. This rapid growth of despotism was favourable to order, to wealth, to the external and material part of civilisation. But it was lamentably deficient in producing intellectual improvement: whilst the turbulent freedom of the cities of Italy not only allowed the increase of riches and luxury, but awoke the dormant minds of its children, so as to give to the world such poets as Dante and Petrarch, and — a proof, perhaps, of still greater advancement — an historian of sense and judgment such as Villani, France remained undistinguished by genius or learning. At the epoch to which we refer, the country betrayed symptoms of deterioration in more than one respect: public morals grew more corrupt, as is evident from the wickedness universally imputed and believed; crime generated crime, and vice reproduced itself, prompted by no passion more lively than ignorance. A stupid and pusillanimous dread of sorcery shed torrents of human blood. The church burned thousands of heretics for a logical blunder; and became itself degenerate in purity, and power, and wisdom, from the moment of its alliance with persecution. The law rivalled the church in absurd and capricious condemnations. Even the spirit of chivalry ceased to actuate so base an age: it expired with the crusades; and was only reinstated by the warriors of the next generation.

The period of history that we now enter upon is marked by the rivalry that sprung up betwixt France and England. Hitherto their quarrels had been those of men speaking the same tongue, and actuated merely by provincial interests; but between Philip of Valois and Edward III. the quarrel became national. In the breasts of both countries it kindled the fire of patriotism and emulation; and though it infused into the strife a spirit of bitterness and inveteracy which usually characterises party dissensions, yet many of the generous effects of

chivalry were produced in the characters of those engaged. It is customary to lament wars, and the blood shed in them; and yet peace, which comes fraught with blessings and virtues to those nations that are far advanced in civilisation, is sometimes pernicious to a people but half emerged from barbarism. Stagnation is then most to be dreaded: the virtues of a rude age are all warlike, or at least war-born. France most certainly degenerated in public spirit and national character, whilst unvexed by her neighbour.

The following century of war, though it increased the trophies of England, was not so wholly disastrous to France as her historians represent. They see the greatness of one country but in the depression of another. Often as the nation was humbled by defeat, her energies were still called forth, her chivalrous spirit was kept alive, her several provinces were knit together and united by one common bond of feeling. Nothing so ennobles a land as a valiant struggle for honour or independence; the blood that is then shed in the field, is neither idly nor fruitlessly expended.

Philip of Valois, who succeeded to the French throne, was the son of Charles count of Valois, who had been brother to Philip the Fair. The last monarch had left his queen *enceinte;* but a daughter having been born, Philip, acting upon the salic law, assumed the crown lately worn by his cousin. His chief competitor was Edward III., son of Isabella daughter of Philip the Fair. The English monarch's claim, though first supported by a strong protest, was not insisted on by Isabella, who was too much occupied with enemies in England to allow of her raising up others abroad: it was nevertheless considered valid in France, even by many of the doctors summoned by Philip to decide the point.* The count d'Evreux, who had married the

* Hume is wrong in considering Edward's claim as utterly unreasonable, or as not entertained by any in France. He is wrong, also, in saying that the salic law was an old established opinion. And he errs in preferring the claim of Charles king of Navarre, whose father, Philip, was living, and was not yet king of Navarre.

daughter of Louis Hutin, entertained pretensions also. The kingdom of Navarre was ceded to him in apanage. Philip of Valois was crowned as king Philip VI. at Rheims, in May, 1328. He was a prince devoted to magnificence and *faste*. His prodigality and love of splendour formed such a brilliant court, that even kings preferred sojourning at it to enjoying the independent sovereignty of their own realms. The kings of Navarre and Bohemia took up their abode in Paris; the dauphin, or prince of Dauphiny, though a feudatory of the emperor, preferred following the king of France both in peace and in war. This conduct of princes, we may well suppose, was imitated by the aristocracy in general, who soon came to exchange the solitary pomp of feudal independence for the show and servility of a court.

The romances of chivalry came at the same time into vogue. The monarch and courtiers had need of a manual of gentility, and precedents for their pompous ceremonials and solemnities. They found them in these volumes.

Here then begin the times of the second or resuscitated chivalry, which surpassed the old in magnificence and refinement, if not in valour. One difference in the spirit of chivalry in this and in the past century is, that formerly it manifested a lordly contempt for the ignobly born. The commons, however, had now risen to wealth and importance, and the nobles were gradually losing their hold of both: contempt, therefore, was converted into hatred, and the chevalier regarded the villein with the jealousy engendered by an unwarrantable encroachment on privileges presumed to be hereditary and exclusive. This was much more the case in France than in England. Nor did the hostility which arose out of this mutual antipathy cease to waste the former country, and to influence its character and its destinies, till it at length exploded in the tremendous phenomena of the Revolution.

At Philip's coronation, Louis count of Flanders at-

tended as one of the great peers. He demanded the king's aid against the Flemings, the citizens of Bruges and Ypres, who insisted on their municipal privileges. Philip, eager to lead an army, grasped the opportunity: his nobles, anxious to tread down the commonalty, seconded him. He accordingly marched against the Flemings, who, to the number of 16,000, attacked his camp in the night near Cassel. After the first surprise the French rallied, surrounded and slaughtered the enemy: 13,000 are said to have fallen in the field, and 10,000 on the scaffold. The count was re-established by the victory.

Despite the just claim to the crown of France that Edward III. considered himself to possess, he hesitated for a long time to enforce it by arms. Philip, emboldened by his victory at Cassel, required Edward to come and do homage for Guienne. The English monarch obeyed; nor did Edward, who was prudent as brave, determine to wage war with the French king, and put forth pretensions to his throne, till he was prompted thereto by the advice and aid of Robert d'Artois. This prince, a descendant of St. Louis, had claimed the county of Artois. A female heir had, however, been preferred to him; and two judgments had so decided the question. Robert, seeing the salic law prevail with respect to the throne, thought it must equally apply to a great province, and again agitated the matter. It was asserted that he brought forged documents to support his right; that the fraud was discovered, and its author disgraced. Such is the general account of historians, which Sismondi, however, doubts. Accusation in those days was seldom confined within limits of moderation or truth. Of whatever crime a man was declared guilty, sorcery was always added to fill up the measure. Robert was accused of making against Philip a *voute*, in other words a waxen image, which he pricked, tortured, and burned; supposing that the consumption of the model would occasion the destruction of the original. This is the common crime or accusation of the age. Robert, who refused to appear, was condemned and exiled. He sought refuge,

first in Flanders, then in England, where he was well received by Edward, and became his counsellor and instigator against France. Causes of quarrel multiplied betwixt the two countries. Philip favoured the Scotch: Edward formed an alliance with the Flemish citizens, whose count was attached to France; more especially with Artaveldt, a brewer of hydromel or metheglin, one of their leaders. The Flemings, who carried on a thriving trade with England, preferred joining that country; but scruples of allying with a foreign prince against their feudal lord, the king of France, checked even the licentious citizens. To obviate this difficulty, Artaveldt advised Edward to assume the title of king of France, which he claimed as a right. Edward was not backward in adopting the brewer's suggestion; an act by which war was virtually declared.* Notwithstanding the magnitude of the preparations, the first campaign was signalised by no action or enterprise. Both kings were paralysed by the greatness of the stake; and the armies, which faced each other, separated without coming to blows. Philip, who had purchased the aid of the Genoese and collected a fleet, burnt and pillaged Southampton. Edward gathered a few ships, crowded them with knights and archers, and sailed in pursuit. He found the French fleet drawn close to the Dutch shore near Sluys. He instantly bore down upon it, hooked vessel to vessel, and by forming the decks into a platform converted the engagement into one partaking of the character of a land fight. After an obstinate struggle, the French were defeated with immense loss, and their fleet was destroyed. This was the only engagement of the war. A truce immediately followed, which was subsequently prolonged. The enmity so often regarded as natural to these two great nations does not yet appear to have sprung up, and they now seemed to be far more desirous for repose than swayed by mutual animosity or ardour for martial enterprise.

Disturbances in Britany meanwhile implicated the

* 1337.

monarchs in fresh quarrels. John duke of Britany died in April, 1341, without children: his second brother had left a daughter, married to Charles of Blois, Philip's nephew: another brother, the count de Montfort, was living and in the flower of his age. The uncle and niece disputed the succession; and the uncertain validity or extent of the Salic law, which each party interpreted in the manner favourable to themselves, produced another domestic quarrel. The count de Montfort was first in the field, and took possession of the chief towns of the province. Charles of Blois remained in Paris to plead his cause. De Montfort was summoned, and the court of peers decided in favour of the king's nephew, Charles. It was necessary to vindicate this right by arms. Philip supported Charles of Blois; De Montfort had recourse to England, and did homage to Edward as king of France for his duchy of Britany. The scene of war between the nations was thus transferred to this province. The commencement proved unfortunate to De Montfort; he was surprised in the town of Nantes by his rival, taken prisoner, and conveyed to the Louvre. But the countess de Montfort, who, in the words of Froissart, "had the courage of a man and the heart of a lion," presented her infant son to her followers, and promised that he would prove a generous prince to them, and an avenger of his sire. She shut herself up in Hennebon, and was besieged by her enemies. She made a valiant defence; and, in a sortie which she headed in person, burnt the camp of her enemies. The English fleet arrived to her assistance under Walter de Manny, and compelled the French to retire: Robert d'Artois soon after landed in Britany and took the town of Vannes; but it was retaken by De Clisson, and Robert received such severe wounds that he did not long survive. A truce concluded, in 1343, between Philip and Edward partly caused hostilities to cease; it was ill observed by the Bretons of either party.

The internal administration of Philip in the mean time resembled that of his predecessors, both in good and in

evil: he resisted the usurpations of the clergy, confirmed the authority of parliament over inferior courts, and consulted the true interests of the monarchy by the purchase of Dauphiny. But he oppressed his subjects by debasing the coin, and by every means of raising money. It was he who established the *gabelle*, — that most odious regulation, which reserved to the king the sole right of making and selling salt throughout the realm, forcing each family to take a certain quantity at an exorbitant price. This too he established by an *ordonnance*, without having recourse to an assembly of the states-general. The deference which Edward III. always manifested to his own subjects, as well as his respect for their liberties, is contrasted with the contempt shown by Philip for the body of the nation and its privileges. During the present truce, the French king decoyed a number of Breton knights to a tournament, seized upon them, and executed them without even the form of a trial, disdaining to assign reason or plea for his conduct. It was presumed that they had entered into communication with England.

In 1345 the war again broke out. The earl of Derby fought in Gascony against the count of Lille-Jourdain; the latter besieged Auberoche. The garrison sent a page to summon the English to their aid; the poor envoy was taken, placed in one of the besiegers' huge engines, and literally shot back into the town. Derby, however, came unawares on the French, defeated them, and made prisoners of the greater part of the nobility of Languedoc. The death of De Montfort relaxed the fury of the war in Britany. Edward turned his arms first to Flanders; but his ally Artaveldt had lost his influence over his fellow citizens, and being soon after slain by them in a tumult, the English king left that part of the country. The following year Edward mustered his best forces; resolving no more to harass the frontiers of the enemy, but to penetrate boldly into his land, and strike, if possible, a decisive blow. He landed at La Hogue, took Caen, and was almost incited to

massacre the inhabitants on finding that an engagement had lately been entered into betwixt the Normans and Philip to reconquer England. He allowed himself to be dissuaded. Edward, from Caen, marched along the left bank of the Seine to Paris; he stopped at Poissy to find means for passing the river, and burnt all the towns in the vicinity of the capital, St. Germain and St. Cloud amongst others. A body of German auxiliaries having reinforced Philip, Edward thought it best to retreat northwards through an unravaged country. The expedition was one of hazard. Philip was now pursued by his enemies with a far superior army; numbers were in advance to intercept the English king, more especially to prevent his passage of the Somme. Edward, however, crossed a ford below Abbeville, notwithstanding the resistance of one of Philip's lieutenants, and the following day established his camp at Crecy, where he resolved to await the enemy.

On the morning of the 26th of August, 1346, Edward drew up his army in three lines on a gentle slope, with a wood behind, where he placed baggage and horses. His cavaliers were to fight on foot; as, from the smallness of the English numbers,—"one eighth of the French," says Froissart, but at most one third,—it was requisite they should keep together and fight on the defensive. Edward, after riding through the ranks and exhorting his soldiers, cheerfully commanded them to sit down, to take ample refreshment, and in repose await the enemy. Philip in the mean time was leading forth his numerous host from Abbeville: it was an army lately gathered, obeying many chiefs, some Genoese, some Germans; undisciplined, weak, and disorderly, from its very numbers. From Abbeville to Crecy was a march of three or four leagues. The hour was late, and the French were tired ere they approached the English line. Philip was advised to halt and await the following day; he gave orders for so doing; but such was the rivalry of the chiefs, that each would have his banner next the enemy, and in the disorder they approached too near.

the English to retreat or defer the action. The choleric Philip, too, when he saw the English array, and its small extent, became anxious to annihilate his enemies. He ordered the Genoese cross-bowmen to begin the action; they were reluctant, and pleaded fatigue. "Kill the lazy ribalds!" said the count d'Alençon; and the Genoese were compelled to attack: they did so with a loud clamour, which was increased by a storm of rain and thunder, and by an immense flock of crows which hovered over the armies, and was regarded as an evil presage. The English archers advanced each one step in silence, and by one volley slaughtered and discomfited the Genoese. The French knights, enraged, drew their swords on the unfortunate auxiliaries, and cut their way through to arrive at the enemy. They encountered the first line of the English under the prince of Wales; and here was the heat of the battle. Edward was sent to for aid; but he, who saw the strife and knew the mettle of his men, refused. "Let my son win his spurs!" said the monarch; and bravely did young Edward, afterwards the Black Prince, earn these symbols of knighthood. The French were beaten, despite their immense numbers; and as darkness soon came on to increase the confusion and render it impossible to recognise knight or noble, the slaughter was great. Eleven princes fell in the field; also nearly an hundred nobles bearing banners, twelve hundred chevaliers, and thirty thousand soldiers. Amongst them were the kings of Bohemia and Majorca, the dukes of Lorraine and Bourbon, the counts of Flanders and Alençon. Godfrey of Harcourt, who was in Edward's army, saw his brother the count of Harcourt and his two sons perish in the opposite ranks. Philip was compelled to take flight. Such was the battle of Crecy, remarkable for the noble blood shed in it, and for the brief space in which it was decided. Though the defeat was owing in a great measure to the want of discipline and ill assortment of Philip's army, the chief cause in this, as in other instances, was the contempt of the French princes and nobles for the peasant levies

and infantry, to which they evidently preferred the rabble of foreign mercenaries. The day after the action large bodies of the militia of neighbouring municipalities arrived, and were slaughtered by the English. Edward, on the contrary, relied upon his country's yeomen, and compelled his knights to dismount and fight on foot with them.

After his victory Edward laid siege to Calais. The tide of fortune was turned every where against the French by the tidings of Crecy. John, the son of Philip, besieged Walter de Manny in the town of Aiguillon; he was now obliged to raise the siege. De Manny asked John for permission and safe conduct to traverse France in order to reach his master's army: John granted the safe conduct; but his father Philip broke it, and arrested De Manny in his passage through Orleans. John, an honourable prince, was shocked at his father's want of faith, and vowed no longer to bear arms unless De Manny was released; and Philip, despite his choler and feelings of petty vengeance, was obliged to liberate him. Charles of Blois was about the same time taken prisoner in Britany. The circumstances attending the siege of Calais, its distress, the devotedness of its six burgesses, and its final surrender, are known to every English reader.* Edward seemed contented with this fruit of his victory, for a truce of ten months was soon after agreed on between the monarchs. The remaining years of the French king's reign are marked chiefly by the plague which devastated Europe, and which compelled a prolongation of the truce. Philip of Valois died in August, 1350.

John was upwards of thirty when he succeeded his father Philip. The new king was feebler in character than his predecessor, less choleric and astute. He was at the same time more valiant, more amiable, more the *preux chevalier*, for already romance reading had created a peculiar morality and ideal perfection at which gentle and noble aimed. The same neglect of

* See Cab. Cyc. Hist. Eng. vol. i. p. 300.

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justice reigned, however, and was observable even in John, whose first steps were to adulterate the coin, and, in imitation of his father, to decapitate, without trial, a nobleman, the count de Guines. The states-general were called together, and they voted a pernicious mode of levying money on every sale that took place. In their assembly of the year 1355, when the necessities of the monarch had increased, the states established receivers-general, who should give them an account of the levy. They ordered, moreover, that nobles and prelates should pay it as well as the commons, and that they should reassemble at the end of a year to vote new taxes. This was a bold attempt to acquire the same privileges which were possessed by the English commons.

The court was in the mean time agitated by the turbulence of Charles the Bad, king of Navarre. In imitation of the sovereign's custom of putting his enemies to death without trial or accusation, Charles assassinated his rival, Louis of Spain, a favourite with John, and constable of the realm. He was powerful enough to obtain pardon; nevertheless his intrigues continued. The kingdom was in a state of the greatest discontent against the new taxes, especially against the *gabelle*. The king of Navarre, the count of Harcourt, and others, fomented these disturbances. Charles, eldest son of John, called the dauphin, as lord of Dauphiny, which Philip of Valois had purchased for him, was at that time governor of Normandy. He entertained the king of Navarre and the lord of Harcourt at dinner. John arriving in the midst of the feast, armed and well attended, ordered none to stir on pain of death. He seized the king of Navarre "by the skin," dragging him towards him, and exclaimed—"Out, traitor! thou art not worthy to dine at my son's table. By my father's soul! I have a mind never to eat or drink while thou livest." John then ordered the king of Navarre and his followers to be led out and imprisoned, despite the supplications of the dauphin, who said he should be dishonoured if people suspected him of such treachery. King John then

seized a mace, struck count Harcourt with it between the shoulders, and told him to "get to prison in the devil's name;" whereupon calling the "king of the ribalds," as the captain of the royal guards was then characteristically denominated, John gave him orders. Those orders were to behead Harcourt and his followers: they were executed in the king's presence, after he finished the dinner at which his son's unfortunate guests had been sitting. The family of Harcourt, that of the king of Navarre, and many nobles, renounced their allegiance on learning this act of violence. The people were equally enraged against John; but their murmurs and commotions were hushed by the tidings, that the Black Prince had ravaged Auvergne and the Limousin, and had entered into the central province of Berri. John had a respectable army on foot against the partisans of the king of Navarre. He summoned his barons and knights to reinforce it. All crowded under the banners of the new monarch to avenge the defeat of Crecy. Prince Edward had left Bordeaux with no more than 2000 men at arms, and 6000 archers and infantry. With this small force he thought it prudent to retreat; but John had already intercepted him, and the English, instead of having left their enemies behind, found them in advance of the town of Poitiers, blocking their retreat.

The French army, composed of the flower of the nation, mustered 60,000 strong. The prince of Wales, to compensate for his inferiority of numbers, took post on a rising ground, which was surrounded with vineyards and enclosures, and was only approachable through narrow roads flanked with hedgerows. Talleyrand cardinal of Perigord endeavoured to bring about an accommodation. The Black Prince was not reluctant to escape from an enemy ten times exceeding his own force. He offered to restore all his conquests, and bind himself not to serve against France for seven years. John insisted that Edward should surrender himself his prisoner; and the proposal was rejected by the prince

as disgraceful. He gained a day's delay by these negotiations, which he failed not to employ in casting up entrenchments and fortifying the sides of his position.

On the 19th of September, a corps of French knights was ordered to clear the road leading to Edward's camp. They were commanded by D'Andrehen and De Clermont, the two marshals of France. They spurred on, not more than four being able to go abreast. The English archers, who lined the inside of the hedge, soon stopped the career of the cavalry by their arrows; and the footmen, creeping through, stabbed knights and horses with their knives in the confusion. The troop was routed, and fell back upon the dauphin's corps; a body of English cavalry and archers, which Edward had placed in ambuscade, then charged upon the French flank: those commanded by the dauphin were seized with a panic and fled. The English knights, who were hitherto on foot to receive the enemy, now mounted their horses, and abandoning their position, charged down the narrow road upon the enemy, whom they put to the rout and drove before them; the young princes and many of the French nobles taking flight. The reserve or hindmost line, however, commanded by king John in person, still remained unbroken. Its numbers doubled those of the English army. John, imitating his enemy's mode of fighting, and desirous to cut off from himself and followers all possibility of flight, gave orders to dismount and combat on foot. The fresh division of the French charged the English under their marshals lords Suffolk and Warwick, the French monarch striking down enemies with his mace, while his youngest son Philip, afterwards duke of Burgundy, piously kept eye and arm busied to defend his sire. Here the battle raged with the greatest fury and slaughter, the English striving to make the king of France prisoner. At length, when most of his nobles were either slain around him or taken, John called out, "Where is my cousin the prince of Wales?" Edward

was not near, and the king was obliged to give his right glove, in token of surrender, to Morbec, a knight of Arras. Others crowded to claim and dispute so rich a prize, not without danger to the person of the monarch, until lords Warwick and Cobham arrived to defend him. The battle of Poitiers, according to Froissart, was better fought than that of Crecy, though not so bloody. The duke of Bourbon was the only prince slain, though many nobles perished. The number of prisoners was immense, more than doubling that of the English army; amongst them, thirteen counts, and seventy barons, besides the king and his son. The conflict lasted from morn till noon. That of Crecy began at the time of vespers. The Black Prince earned more honour by his treatment of the captive king than even by his victory. John was treated in every way as a sovereign: he was cheered, praised, and even waited on at table, by Edward. The entry of the royal captive into London was marked by the same deference. Nor was this mere empty politeness. The king of England and his son did not take the utmost advantage of their victory. The right to the crown of France, which they denied to John at the head of his armies, they no longer disputed with John, a captive. A truce was concluded for two years. The English were content with their booty, their rich prize, and their ample renown.

Charles, the dauphin, who had escaped from the field of Poitiers, now took upon him the government of the kingdom. His first act was to summon the states-general, which met in two assemblies; those of the south at Toulouse, those of the north at Paris. The southern states voted levies of men and money: the northern proved more refractory, and demanded, as the price of a subsidy, that the ministers should be tried; that a committee of their own body should be permanent, to aid the dauphin with its counsel; and, finally, that the king of Navarre should be released. The king of Navarre was the first noble who sought in popularity a counterpoise against the royal authority. The popular

party was headed by Stephen Marcel, provost or chief of the municipality of Paris. The king evaded these demands, and tried the old experiment of issuing new and debased money. An insurrection was the consequence: Marcel made his way to the presence of the dauphin; and, by his order, the marshals Clermont and Conflans were massacred in Charles's presence. Marcel made the young prince put on the *chaperon* or cap, which was the symbol of insurrection,—a circumstance repeated in after times of similar turbulence and misfortune. It is remarkable how far advanced the Parisians were at this time in their aims at freedom, and in what has been called revolutionary tactics. The other towns and provinces did not, however, approve of the bold notions of the Parisians. Champagne, especially, declared against them, and the dauphin was enabled to collect an assembly of states at Compiegne, which condemned the acts of those of Paris. The provost Marcel released the king of Navarre from prison, in order to procure an eminent leader for the party. Despite of this, the dauphin's influence prevailed; Marcel was slain in a tumult, and the king of Navarre driven from the capital.

Mutual hatred betwixt the nobles and peasants was at this time general in France. The latter enjoyed their feudal privileges and superiority as guerdon for defending the country in arms. The defeats of Poitiers and Creey showed them unequal to this task; and the French peasantry, who were not considered by their lords as worthy to wield a sword, looked on the discomfited knights and barons with contempt. This spirit of discontent was increased by the weight of the taxes; not only the public taxes of the *gabelle*, and the duty on sales, but the private *taille*, which possessors of fiefs levied on their tenants, and which were now exorbitant on account of the ransoms requisite for so many captives: then the disbanded soldiers of both armies increased the disorder by robbery and pillage. The reclamation of the states-general, the effervescence of the population inciting

the towns, set the example of licence; and every where throughout the kingdom the peasants were vowing vengeance on all nobly born, storming castles, massacring gentlemen and their families, and putting many to the torture. This popular insurrection was called the *Jaquerie*, from the name of *Jaques Bonhomme*, or *Jaques*, given in derision to the French peasant. The hatred and contempt of both classes was mutual; Froissart tells triumphantly, "how the gentlemen of Beauvaisy killed great plenty of Jaques." Three hundred ladies of rank, with the duchess of Orleans, were obliged to take refuge in Méaux from the exasperated peasantry. Captal de Buch, a Gascon knight in Edward's service, flew to their rescue, slaughtered seven thousand of the assailants, and, to crown his revenge, burnt the town of Méaux "with all the villeins he could shut up in it."

After two years captivity, king John sought to release himself by treaty. He agreed to cede to Edward the entire west of France in sovereignty, together with four thousand crowns ransom. The dauphin wisely rejected conditions so injurious to the monarchy, and Edward prepared for fresh hostilities. He landed at Calais in October, 1358, resolved to ravage those parts of France that had not yet seen his banners. He entered Champagne; sat down before Rheims, as if with the wish of having himself crowned king of France in its cathedral; but, abandoning the tediousness of a siege, he penetrated into Burgundy, which, like many towns, purchased an alliance with him, and exemption from ravages. Edward then directed his march towards the capital, encamped before it, and defied the dauphin to battle. That cautious prince replied by burning the suburbs and keeping himself within the walls; and in a little time Edward was obliged to retire towards the Loire in search of provisions.

The English king had now traversed the whole circuit of France as a conqueror. He had full opportunities for observing that he could never establish his authority

elsewhere than in those provinces which he might claim by hereditary right. He was in years, and was naturally anxious to establish a permanent peace. Perhaps, too, he was somewhat stricken by remorse at so much devastation and bloodshed. Edward announced, that during a thunder-storm he had made a vow to restore peace to the world. Commissioners met on both sides, and a treaty was concluded at Bretigny between France and England, in May, 1360: Edward gave up his pretensions to the crown of France, as well as to Normandy. All Aquitaine and the provinces south-west of the Loire were ceded in full sovereignty to England, as was the country on the sea-coast from Calais to the Somme. Three millions of crowns were to be given as the ransom of king John, who was within a short time liberated. He reigned three years after the recovery of his freedom; a period marked chiefly by the decline of the family of the old dukes of Burgundy, which became extinct. They were descended from Robert, son of Hugh Capet. The crown took possession of that rich duchy; but John, overlooking the true interests of the monarchy, or ignorant of them, gave Burgundy in apanage to his fourth son Philip, who had been taken prisoner with him at Crecy. Though the peace concluded at Bretigny was not broken, still many of its stipulations remained unfulfilled. The most flagrant instance of bad faith was the escape from England of one of the hostages, the duke of Anjou: either from this cause, or from a wish to negotiate with Edward, John returned to London, and died at the Savoy palace in the Strand, in April, 1364.

King John's was an inconsistent character; valiant though weak, generous and honourable in many instances, but cruel, and even perfidious in his treatment of count d'Harcourt. His reign is remarkable as being the period in which the states-general professed the boldest maxims of freedom, and made the most vigorous efforts to establish them. They decreed their recognition of the great principle, that no subject should be compelled

to pay a tax to which he had not legally assented. This, to which England held as to an anchor through every political storm, was soon torn from the grasp of the French, or abandoned by them. The years 1355 and 1356 may be considered the only period during which the French monarchy marched in the path of constitutional freedom. They were the moments of a brief and ill-contested struggle, in which royalty prevailed. This advantage it never afterwards lost or conceded. From the days of Marcel to the Revolution, all attempts to wrest from despotism its iron sceptre proved vain. The most pernicious and unjust prerogatives were in course of time held to be sacred; and henceforth the internal peace and happiness of the nation came to consist in the forbearance of the master and the submission of the slave.

It was fortunate for the independence, though not for the liberties of the country, that a prudent and crafty monarch succeeded to the throne of John. His son, Charles V., is known by the name of the Sage: he had already reigned as dauphin, and had learned wisdom from adversity and experience. His first act was to attack that intriguing grandee, Charles king of Navarre, who had troubled John's reign by avowing himself the supporter of popular rights. The continuance of the war had called forth warlike talents. Du Guesclin, a knight of Britany, had signalised himself in the troubles of the province. Charles, with his characteristic prudence, selected him as general, and sent him to dispossess the king of Navarre of the towns which he held in Normandy. John de Grailli, called the captal (lord) de Buch, a famed captain of Gascony, was opposed to him by Charles of Navarre. In a combat where great military skill as well as courage was displayed on both sides, the captal was defeated and taken by Du Guesclin. The war was then transferred to Britany. Du Guesclin and Charles of Blois marched against the troops of De Montfort — most of them English, and commanded by Robert Knolles. Against these enemies Du Guesclin was not

so successful: he was taken prisoner, and Charles of Blois slain. The victory of Auray gave complete peace to France. John de Montfort was recognised duke of Britany by Charles, who at the same time made peace with the king of Navarre.

The worst consequences of war continued to afflict and weigh upon France, notwithstanding the conclusion of these treaties. The bands of mercenary soldiers, or great companies, which lent their support on hire to the respective monarchs, were now left without pay or service to prey upon the land. Charles employed Du Guesclin to treat with these bands, and bribe them to accompany him across the Pyrenees to support Henry of Castile against his brother Peter the Cruel. They were tempted by the plunder of Avignon, which lay in their route. The pope endeavoured to avert their march by absolutions, which he lavished on this army of scoundrels. They accepted the religious immunity, but were not less severe in their exactions. Du Guesclin, at the head of these bands, drove Peter the Cruel from Castile. But the Black Prince and his warriors, impatient of repose, espoused the part of Peter, and attacking Du Guesclin, vanquished and took him prisoner. All these events turned to the advantage of France. The prince of Wales, lavish of his resources as of his valour, was distressed by the expenses of his expedition. He sought to levy, in consequence, an additional tax on every hearth throughout the province of Aquitaine. His subjects resisted. The malcontents appealed to Charles V., who, seeing the infirm state of health both of prince Edward and his father, listened to the complaints of the barons of Aquitaine. He summoned the Black Prince to Paris to answer them. The reply was, a resolve to obey the summons at "the head of sixty thousand men." The threat was vain. War was declared. The prince caused himself to be carried in a litter at the head of his army, and in this state took Limoges. But his malady gained upon him, and he was obliged to return and embark for England, where he soon after expired.

Edward III. was not long in following his heroic son to the grave; and the sceptres of England and Aquitaine were left in the feeble hands of a minor.

Charles the Sage was not a monarch to let pass such advantage. Du Guesclin was made constable, and commanded against the English. Still he had strict orders to avoid giving battle. Instead of confining their efforts to a defence of their provinces, the English marched from Calais across the whole extent of France to Bordeaux, ravaging the country, and exciting the hatred of the population, without gaining their object of exciting the prudent Charles to a general engagement. The strength of the English armies was thus wasted in marching and bravado. Du Guesclin watched every opportunity of gaining a partial advantage. The presumption of the English garrison of Chizey, which attacked very superior forces under the command of the constable, afforded a triumph to the latter. The capital of Poitiers revolted and opened its gates to the French. Rochelle followed its example; and this province, the prize of the victories of the Black Prince, was again lost to the English.

It is evident that the kings of England were struggling against the course of nature and of events, in endeavouring to hold possessions in France: whatever was acquired by the greatest efforts of the statesman, and the most brilliant victories of the hero, was lost again without a single action of any importance. The Anglicised provinces again became French, as waters return to their level. It required but a word, a decree on the part of the king of France, and all that he had alienated, again became his. Thus, whilst the victorious campaigns of the English fill the most brilliant pages of history, those in which France recovers her provinces are merely a succession of petty skirmishes and treasons, in which there is little glory and less interest. The wars of the reign of Charles V. are of the latter kind; so that it is sufficient to indicate their result. Du Guesclin alone appears amongst the French to claim the

honour of a hero. He is the first warrior of modern France—the earliest name in the bright annals of her military fame. He was strong, and of a clumsy and even awkward make. When this redoubted warrior was a prisoner at Bordeaux, after his defeat in Castile, the Black Prince heard it whispered that he retained Du Guesclin because he feared him. Edward bade him name his own ransom, and go to seek it. It was fixed at 100,000 crowns. The princess of Wales paid a considerable portion of it as did John Chandos, the English champion next in repute for valour to prince Edward. Du Guesclin survived his brave enemies but a few years. He died in 1380, at the siege of Randan.

One of the last achievements of Du Guesclin was to drive the newly-acknowledged duke, De Montfort, from Britany. He took refuge in England; but Charles having shown an inclination to destroy the independence of the province by uniting it to the crown, the pride of the Breton nobles was alarmed. Du Guesclin himself felt, for the first and only time, his feelings of loyalty abate. The duke was summoned back from England by the people of the duchy, and welcomed with more enthusiasm and attachment than he had ever yet excited. It was to support the duke of Britany that the duke of Gloucester led an army into France in the year 1380. Following the usual tactics of the day, he traversed the country, daring the French to action. They were said to be preparing to accept the challenge when tidings of the dangerous illness of the king came, to turn the zeal and anxiety of princes and nobles from patriotic to selfish views. Charles, when dauphin, was said to have been poisoned by the king of Navarre. An antidote taken opportunely had saved his life, but left him still weakly. His hair and nails had dropped off at the time. The remembrance of this peril and the potency of the poison were said to be the cause of the timidity of his character, as well as of his early death. It took place in September, 1380, at the castle of Beauté, on the Marne.

It was not undeservedly, that Charles V. obtained the title of Sage. He succeeded to power in one of the most critical periods of the monarchy, when, humbled by the English, it was at the same time threatened by the people, who had risen to know their rights and to demand them. To have conceded those rights was not to be expected from a monarch of that day,—scarcely to be hoped, indeed; for liberty, so valuable as a conquest, is precarious as a boon. The predecessors of Charles had raised up the commons to be a counterpoise to the aristocracy, and had favoured the passage of wealth and importance into plebeian hands. When, however, to ensure this wealth, the commons sought for political privileges and influence, the monarch turned to crush them. They had established their rights in the reign of John; but Charles succeeded in putting them down, and effectually destroying them.

In England the aristocracy had always taken the lead in asserting and defending the liberties, not only of their own order, but of the country generally. There was a strong community of feeling between the English nobles and the great body of the people, who were raised above the corresponding class in France by their ancient Saxon laws and free institutions, by a larger exemption from the evils of war, and by the greater compactness and unity of the country, which favoured the equal distribution of justice. In France, on the contrary, the peasant was a despised, oppressed creature. The walls of a town alone defended the plebeian; and to the town every peasant hied that had the least property to enjoy or to preserve. Hence the face of the country was deserted by all, save the destitute. Those substantial husbandmen, who formed the class of yeomen in England, disappeared in France, or were converted into burgesses. In the latter country, accordingly, the spirit of liberty was confined to the municipalities, each of which, from the extent and poverty of the land, was isolated, having no communication or sympathy with those around it. The partisans of freedom, collected into partial knots and masses, were

thus either easily overawed and crushed, or, finding themselves superior in force, asserted their independence and privileges with all the licence of a town rabble. They stopped not short of riot and bloodshed, rendered the name of freedom synonymous with disorder, and rallied to the side of royalty all the lovers of security and peace.

Such is the history of events in France. The states-general wrested from John an acknowledgment of their political rights. When the monarch or his son sought to withdraw these concessions, it was the population of the capital that rose against their bad faith. The nobility kept aloof; the peasantry were ignorant of what was going forward. The Parisians under Marcel, finding themselves in possession of power, made a turbulent and licentious use of it, massacred those whom they suspected, and stained their cause with violence and bloodshed.

Charles took advantage of this: he made an appeal to order; and, calling a patched-up assembly of states at Compiegne, he succeeded in crushing the Parisians. During his reign the cry of liberty was stifled. Charles the Sage seldom called the states together, or, when he did, it was upon a few chosen deputies that he bestowed the name. He usurped to himself the power of levying taxes by proceeding in state to the parliament, there holding what was called a bed of justice, and ordering his laws or levies to be registered.

Such was the new mode of legislation invented by Charles, and which endured until the Revolution. The ancient mode of promulgating a law was to register it in the books of parliament, which was the high court of justice of the kingdom. Charles assumed this form of promulgation to have the entire force of legislation; and thus by a trick converted a government, that hitherto at least contained the germs of freedom, into an absolute monarchy.

Charles the Sage left two sons: Charles VI., who now succeeded him, and had not attained twelve years of age; and Louis, afterwards duke of Orleans. The

infant king had four uncles to dispute his tutelage, and the direction of affairs: these were the dukes of Anjou, Berry, and Burgundy, brothers of the late monarch, and the duke of Bourbon, his brother-in-law. Charles the Sage, foreseeing the ambition of his relatives, had ordained that the kings of France should attain their majority at the age of fourteen. He had regulated that the duke of Anjou should be regent, whilst the dukes of Burgundy and Bourbon should have the care of the young king.

The duke of Anjou commenced by pillaging the royal treasure. A great proportion of the late monarch's savings was concealed in the château of Melun. The duke summoned the treasurer, and under menace of the torture compelled him to point out the part of the wall in which the ingots were built, and which he immediately tore down. At the ceremony of the coronation the duke of Anjou claimed to be at the right hand of the king, as eldest prince of the blood; the duke of Burgundy, as first peer of the realm, seized the place, and kept it. Upon their return to Paris the quarrel continued, but the people paid for it. The treasury was left empty, and the soldiers were compelled to prey on the country for support. The peasants as well as the municipality of Paris rose; but there seems to have been no understanding between bodies so distinct as the citizens and the peasantry. The dukes were obliged to repeal the new taxes; but the government could not proceed without them. Fresh ones were proclaimed. The mob attacked the receivers, broke into the arsenal, seized a quantity of leaden mallets — the only weapons at hand, —and forced all the palaces and prisons. Rouen imitated the example of Paris, but was severely punished by the duke of Anjou. The young king and his uncle made a kind of compromise with the Parisians, and were permitted to enter the capital. The duke of Anjou saw that spoliation became more difficult in France. His cousin Jeanne, queen of Naples, had bequeathed to him by testament all the rights of the first house of Anjou—

the kingdom of Naples, and the county of Provence. The sovereignty was, nevertheless, claimed by Charles of Durazzo. The duke of Anjou departed from France with all his wealth and a brilliant army, to conquer his new heritage. He marched through Italy, invaded Naples, his rival retiring before him. But being seized with a malady, brought on by his fatigues, he died; and his army, dispersing itself, made the best of its way home in scattered bands.

Philip duke of Burgundy, though the youngest son of king John, was by far the most powerful of the brothers. In addition to the duchy and county of Burgundy, (the latter is known as Franche-Comté,) he had married the daughter and heiress of the last count of Flanders, and was thus heir to that wealthy province. The Flemish burgesses were foremost in supporting their privileges and independence: they were always at war with their count, who, from his alliance with Burgundy, naturally sought the aid of the king of France. The young Charles was delighted at the idea of a campaign; an army was levied; the *oriflamme*, or royal standard, hoisted; and the French, under their monarch of fourteen, advanced northwards. The object of the expedition was not only to restore to the count of Flanders his authority, but to punish the turbulent commons, who stirred up those of France to imitate their example. Froissart avows it to have been a war between the commons and the aristocracy. The Flemings were commanded by Artaveldt, son of the famous brewer the ally of Edward. The town of Ghent had been reduced to the extreme of distress and famine by the count and the people of Bruges, who supported him. Artaveldt led the people of Ghent in a forlorn hope against Bruges, defeated the army of the count, and broke into the rival town, which he took and plundered.

After this disaster, the count had recourse to France. The passage of the river Lys, which defended Flanders, was courageously undertaken, and effected with some hazard by the French. The Flemings were rather dis-

pirited by this first success: nevertheless they assembled their forces; and the two armies of French knights and Flemish citizens met at Rosebecque, between Ypres and Courtray. The 27th of November, 1382, was the day of battle. Artaveldt had stationed his army on a height, to await the attack of the French, but their impatience forced him to commence. Forming his troops into one solid square, Artaveldt led them against the French centre. Froissart compares their charge to the headlong rush of a wild boar. It broke the opposite line, penetrating into its ranks: but the wings of the French turned upon the flank of the Flemings, which, not having the advantage of a charge or impulse, were beaten by the French men at arms. Pressed upon one another, the Flemings had not room to fight: they were hemmed in, surrounded, and slaughtered: no quarter was asked or given; nearly 30,000 perished. The 9000 Ghentois that had marched under their banner were counted, to a man, amongst the slain: Artaveldt, their general, was among the foremost who had fallen. Charles ordered his body to be hung upon a tree.

It was at Courtray, very near to the field where this battle was fought, that Robert of Artois, with a French army, had perished beneath the swords of the Flemings, nearly a century previous. The gilded spurs of the French knights still adorned the walls of the cathedral of Courtray. The victory of Rosebecque in the eyes of Charles had not sufficiently repaid the former defeat: the town of Courtray was pillaged and burnt; its famous clock was removed to Dijon, and formed the third wonder of this kind in France, Paris and Sens alone possessing similar ornaments. The battle of Rosebecque proved more unfortunate for the communes of France than for those of Flanders. Ghent, notwithstanding her loss of 9000 slain, did not yield to the conqueror, but held out the war for two years longer; and did not finally submit until the duke of Burgundy, at the death of their count, guaranteed to the burghers the full enjoyment of their privileges. The king avenged himself on

the mutinous city of Paris; entered it as a conqueror; took the chains from the streets, and unhinged the gates: one hundred of the citizens were sent to the scaffold; the property of the rich was confiscated; and all the ancient and most onerous taxes, the *gabelle*, the duty on sales, as well as that of entry, were declared by royal ordonnance to be established anew. The principal towns of the kingdom were visited with the same punishments and exactions. The victory of Rosebecque overthrew the commons of France, which were crushed under the feet of the young monarch and his nobles.

The wish of Charles the Sage had been, that his son should marry a German princess: Isabella of Bavaria was mentioned. She was induced to make a pilgrimage to Amiens, where the young king saw her and admired her beauty. His marriage took place in a few days after. The following year was spent in mighty preparations for an invasion of England: a large fleet and army was assembled at Sluys, and every province was drained of men and provisions to complete the expedition. The king himself was eager to embark; but his uncle, the duke of Berri, not famed for courage, purposely delayed the departure, and the project was finally abandoned.

At length the young king liberated himself from the tutelage of his uncle. He declared in council that he alone would conduct the affairs of the kingdom for the future: he changed his ministers, and gave the post commanding the chief influence to the constable De Clisson, a friend of Du Guesclin, and like him a Breton. De Clisson was a grim old veteran; brave, unyielding, and having many enemies, among whom was the duke of Britany, lately reconciled to France. One night the constable was attacked by a band of assassins in the street, and left for dead. The perpetrator of this outrage, De Craon, fled to Britany; the king vowed vengeance, and raised an army to punish the duke of Britany and De Craon. As he was leading it from the town of Le Mans, in a burning day of August, a maniac rushed from an adjoining wood, seized his bridle, and

told him he was betrayed: soon after, the spear of one of his attendants fell on the helmet of another; the king was alarmed, and thought of the menaced treachery. The fright disturbed his reason, and, drawing his sword, Charles attacked his followers, slew some of them, who made no resistance, till he flew at his brother the duke of Orleans; they then perceived his loss of reason. He was deprived of his arms, and reconducted to Paris. The royal dukes resumed their hold of power: Burgundy menaced the constable, threatening to beat out "his other eye;" and De Clisson fled to his castle for safety. During the recovery of the king, another accident happened, to which his madness has been generally attributed. There was a masquerade, in which Charles and some of his courtiers appeared in the disguise of satyrs, dressed in shirts daubed with pitch and covered with flax: these happened to take fire. The king's unlucky garment was quenched in time, but several of his companions perished. Though this accident did not immediately affect him, yet the malady soon after returned with increased violence, and for the remainder of his life Charles VI. continued a maniac, though his phrensy had lucid intervals of short duration.

The beginning of the century marks the breaking forth of the differences between the dukes of Orleans and Burgundy. The former, though brother to the unfortunate king, and now at the mature age of thirty, was deprived of all influence in the council or in affairs of state. When Charles had thrown off the authority of his uncles, the duke of Orleans and De Clisson succeeded to their influence. The malady of the king threw Orleans into the shade. This was the original cause of rivalry; they were two political parties struggling for power. The duke of Berri was of a peaceable and timid character. Burgundy took the lead. Valentine Visconti, the duchess of Orleans, who had great power over Charles even in his phrensy, was accused of acquiring it by sorcery: the party of Orleans used recri-

mination: then a mutual hatred existed between the two duchesses; and divers causes, some of them scandalous, are recorded. The duke of Orleans was a libertine: to one of his amours at this period, France owes Dunois the famous bastard of Orleans, founder of the house of Longueville. The duke of Burgundy was sumptuous, prodigal, and choleric.* In the struggle between uncle and nephew all feelings of the public good or public services were lost sight of; each pillaged the treasury, when an opportunity occurred, and then blamed his rival for the distress that ensued. The duke of Orleans brought a body of troops to Paris; his uncle imitated him; and for several weeks the respective armies occupied the capital, neither daring to strike the first blow. A peace was patched up between them. The duke of Burgundy, taking this opportunity to visit his duchy, Orleans levied a new tax, putting the name of Burgundy to the ordonnance. The latter duke protested against the forgery, disclaimed all knowledge of the tax, and refused to share in it, alleging that the people were overburdened already. This conduct and his apparent disinterestedness endeared Burgundy to the Parisians, and to the commons in general, while Orleans was proportionally hated. Chance, more than the merits of either duke, threw the whole weight of popularity into one scale, and for the moment it prevailed. The king, however, incapable as he was of using his reason or discretion, even in his lucid intervals, or of making himself cognizant of affairs, was still allowed to recover authority, when his senses returned. In one of these moments edicts were issued, admitting the queen to the council, and ordering that she should be obeyed. The duke of Orleans by these means regained the ascendant, and availed himself of it to pillage the treasury of a sum lately raised by a severe and distressing tax. The schism of the popedom at the same time contributed to embroil the princes. The death of Philip duke of Bur-

* The *étrennes*, or new-year's gifts, presented by him on the 1st of January, 1402, amounted to 40,000 crowns.

gundy occurred about this period, and the absolute power of misrule devolved, without dispute, on his nephew.

To follow minutely the alternate ascendancy of the two parties, and their selfish struggle for power, would but weary and disgust the reader. John, the new duke of Burgundy, succeeded to his father's position; he was called John the Fearless,—an epithet which spoke sufficiently his audacious character. Not many years previous he had led a crusade against the Turks, and was taken prisoner, with many nobles of France, by the famous Bajazet. It cost the good towns of Burgundy a large contribution to release him. The rapacity of the duke of Orleans threw the appearance of right on the side of Burgundy, who moreover professed himself the foe of tyranny and the friend of the suffering commons. New armies were raised, and again disbanded after a hollow truce and forced reconciliation. The princes slept in the same bed in token of perfect amity. The very evening that succeeded this close renewal of intimacy, a band of assassins, headed by Raoul d'Auquetonville, stationed themselves, by order of Burgundy, in a street through which the duke of Orleans must necessarily pass in repairing to visit the queen. They sent him a false summons from her: he hastened to obey it with few attendants; and was instantly set upon by the assassins, who killed and even mangled him with their hatchets. Great was the alarm: the duke of Burgundy exclaimed against the authors of so infamous a murder; but when the provost of Paris declared before the council that he had a clue to discover the perpetrators, and that he would not fail to bring them to justice provided he was permitted to search the hotels of the princes, Burgundy grew pale. The other princes declared that their palaces were open to the provost's search; but the duke hesitated, and calling aside his uncle, the duke of Berri, confessed that, tempted by the devil, he had instigated the murder. On the first avowal of this audacious crime the princes were thunderstruck, and looked at one another in silence. Natural indignation

was called forth. A council assembled, from which the duke of Burgundy found himself excluded; he instantly fled from Paris to his nearest fortress, Bapaume, and there collected forces. The princes were obliged to smother their resentment. Burgundy returned to Paris, openly avowed and justified the assassination of his nephew, hiring at the same time a university doctor to argue publicly the justice and praiseworthiness of the act. "Tyrants," said the doctor, "place themselves above and beyond the law; to punish them recourse must be had to means beyond the law. It is only the very powerful and noble who can command these means; and, consequently, with them principally it becomes a duty." But what chiefly emboldened the duke to avow such a crime, was the fact that the legal process of trial was itself but a tedious kind of assassination; and the midnight vengeance of the bravo about as equitable and respectable as the noon-day decisions of judge and executioner. Some time after, Burgundy committed a no less atrocious act in causing Montague to be tried and hanged. He was a man sprung from the people, a financier, and a minister beloved by the king, who in his phrensy could not protect him: his crime was his wealth; and the immediate cause of his death was a festival in which he had eclipsed in splendour those of the princes of the blood.

The insurrection of the people of Liege against their bishop, a creature of the duke of Burgundy, called the latter from Paris. His influence had caused John, a younger brother of the house of Bavaria, to be elected bishop; John took deacon's orders to entitle him to assume the episcopal sovereignty, but he refused to be priested, preferring the helmet to the mitre. The Liegeois were discontented at having a profane knight in lieu of a bishop; they entreated and petitioned John to take upon him the sacerdotal character. He laughed at them. They rebelled and drove him out. Such was the crime of the Liegeois. The duke of Burgundy marched against them; a battle was fought at Hasbain, in which the burgesses of Liege were as unfortunate as

those of Ghent had been at Rosebecque. It is said that 26,000 dead were counted on the field of battle.

This victory, won by the duke of Burgundy, intimidated the party of Orleans that had already raised its head in Paris. New submissions were made to him, and a reconciliation, hollow as preceding ones, took place at Chartres. Meantime the young duke of Orleans had attained the age of manhood; he married the daughter of count Armagnac, a Gascon nobleman, of influence in his rude land, warlike, fierce, and not unfitted to lead a party in these days of open strife. By his aid the party of Orleans was revived. Armagnac called towards Paris a little army of his Gascon followers, a savage, sanguinary race; in cruelty they far surpassed the Burgundians: —murder, torture, every species of violence and destruction, marked their steps. The opposite party would not be surpassed in vengeance, and the civil war between Burgundians and Armagnacs became marked with inhuman ferocity.

The city of Paris, according to its old predilection, favoured Burgundy. Still its respectable citizens were found wanting in zeal. Arms were entrusted to the company of butchers, who formed themselves into regiments, and soon became the terror of the city. The Armagnacs penetrated north of Paris. The Gascon soldiers, preferring a plundering life in the midst of France to their own rude and poor homes, were constant to their banners. The duke of Burgundy, on the other hand, could not get his Flemings to quit their families and crafts for more than forty days; he was therefore obliged to call in the English. Henry IV. sent a body of archers to his aid, with whom he drove his enemies from the north of the capital; this was in February. In May we find Henry in league with the Orleans party, who were to restore to the English, in recompense, all their ancient possessions in France. The emissary who bore this treaty was seized at Boulogne; its contents were made public, and great odium was in consequence excited against the Armagnacs. The hapless

monarch, Charles, recovering for a moment from his phrensy, joined in this indignation: he called an army, displayed the oriflamme, and marched with the Burgundians to besiege Bourges. The campaign, as usual, ended without an action, in a kind of treaty. Both parties felt the thirst of pillage and of blood; both wanted the courage to decide their differences in a general combat. No period of history manifests such an utter want of talent; no prowess was shown except in tournaments; no statesmanship save in the planning of a murder. Although the passions of men possessed of power and means were excited to the utmost, yet not a decisive blow was struck in policy or in arms. The fortune of the struggling parties was left to events — to chance. Success and reverse, the former at least, if not both, unearned, alternately ensued; conquerors and conquered, pursued and fled, rolling like destructive waves over the necks of a prostrate and ruined people. Civil wars in general, destructive as they are of peace and prosperity, beget at least the virtue of courage; yet it was not so in France. The peasantry were crushed and trodden down; the nobles and knights feared to trust them with arms. The Bretons and the Gascons, natives of distant provinces, were the only foot-soldiers, the sole infantry of France at this time; and a handful of English sufficed in these quarrels to give the advantage to either party.

The Burgundians next experienced evil fortune. They had gone too far in letting loose the democratic spirit of the Parisians. The butchers, whom they had made paramount, abused their power, broke into the palace of the dauphin, insulted him, and rendered the young prince as well as the better order of the citizens weary of the yoke of Burgundy. The Armagnacs were emboldened to advance upon the capital; some of the citizens took arms against the butchers. The dauphin favoured the re-action, and Burgundy was obliged to fly; his party, deprived of the support of the Parisians, was routed. Charles VI. marched in person against him at

the head of the Armagnacs, besieged and took Soissons, of which the inhabitants of every age and sex were inhumanly massacred. Arras was next invested; but the Armagnacs becoming disgusted at the tediousness of the siege, as the Burgundians had been the previous year at that of Bourges, an accommodation ensued, the duke of Burgundy making verbal submissions.

Whilst France was thus occupied and torn by civil contests, Henry V. had succeeded to the throne of England: his youthful ardour prompted him to emulate the third Edward and the Black Prince; and in the year 1415 he embarked with an army at Southampton, and landed at the mouth of the Seine. He sat down before Harfleur, and took it after a month's siege. The season was already too far advanced for any serious enterprise, and Henry contented himself with the project of marching from Harfleur to Calais. The French had suspended their quarrels in the presence of a foreign enemy. The king himself fixed his quarters at Rouen, and summoned thither his knights and nobles, who thronged in numbers sufficient to treble the English army. Henry endeavoured to cross the Somme, but every ford and passage was guarded, and he was obliged to ascend the river nearly to St. Quentin ere he was able to ford. During the delay caused by this march the French had ample time to throw their whole force between the English and Calais. They had challenged Henry to fix a day and a field of action: he replied with sarcasm, that he did not skulk within walls or towns, but held his way and pitched his camp in the open field; and that they might choose any post between him and Calais;—if impeded, he would force his way.

The French, under the constable D'Albret, followed Henry's suggestion, and posted themselves on the road which the English monarch must pursue, between the villages of Agincourt and Framecourt: they were 50,000 strong. Except the king, the dukes of Berri and Burgundy, all the princes of the blood were present. There were, however, but few Burgundians; and a corps of 6000 burgesses that Paris offered to furnish was rejected

with contempt. On the 24th of October the English army approached; its strength is estimated by Lefebvre St. Remi, who fought in the action, at 1000 men at arms and 10,000 soldiers. In the night of the 24th the armies encamped a league apart, under a heavy rain, neither side exulting; and the French observed, as an unusual fact and an evil omen, that not a steed was heard to neigh during the night. On the following morning Henry, mounted on a grey pony and wearing a helmet adorned with a crown, ordered his battle, placing his little band of knights in the centre, so that their banners were thick together, his archers at the sides and strewn along the front. The French, as usual, were drawn up in three lines: princes, nobles, and chevaliers thronged to the front; and being flanked by two woods, they had not room to extend their line or to fight as they stood. Still they determined to remain on the defensive. The battles of Poitiers and Crecy had been lost by the French assuming the offensive and commencing the attack; now they resolved to await it. Henry was therefore obliged to advance, and his archers soon began to send their deadly showers of arrows amidst the the thick ranks of the French. Clignet de Brabant and the count de Vendôme were ordered to advance with a body of knights to clear away the archers. In this they met with bad success. The field, which had been lately sown, was soaked with rain; the trampling had converted it into deep mud, and it was with difficulty that the horses, bearing men in heavy armour, could extricate themselves or perform aught like a charge. The English archers were defended by stakes which each man stuck before him. The French could not force them. Their horses, galled and maddened by the arrows, rushed back on the main body of the French and threw it into confusion. The English advanced; the archers with hatchets and leaden mallets, leaping into the trenches of the line, commenced the massacre. Fixed in the mud, without room to wield their arms, or discipline to hold together and afford mutual aid, the

French knights were either slain, or, by uncovering their heads, made themselves known and surrendered. The second and third lines, composed of the least eminent of the French, made no resistance, but instantly fled. The English dared not to pursue. They were outnumbered and surrounded by their prisoners and vanquished enemies; and a body of them having presented a show of resistance, Henry felt obliged to give orders that each man should kill his prisoners. This was refused; and he commanded 200 archers especially to execute this odious task. Thus, many of the French were massacred in cold blood, until Henry, seeing that his fears were not founded, put a stop to the slaughter. It has been said by historians, and has been generally repeated, that the three great defeats of the French were principally owing to the mad impetuosity, the absurd courage, of the nobles. Hume, a favourer of the French nation and of gentility, has accredited this. It is not easy to see in this the cause of their reverses. At Agincourt certainly they showed rather a want of manhood. Caution was observed in every movement. Though five times more numerous than the English army, they still kept on the defensive, and, when attacked, they surrendered in a panic: they had here no Du Guesclin, no Bayard, no gallant king John; even the barbarous and sanguinary quarrel between Orleans and Burgundy had stifled courage as well as humanity in the national character.

It is but fair to remark, that in these days of shame the family of Bourbon bore their escutcheon without a stain. One duke had fallen at Crecy; another in the subsequent war; and a prince of the house, at Poitiers. The reigning duke of Bourbon had shown honest indignation at the murder of the duke of Orleans, and had retired from court and public life, rather than countenance the murderer or submit to him. He re-appeared at Agincourt, and was made prisoner there, together with the young duke of Orleans.

Agincourt proved a victory more for the Burgundians

than for the English. Henry marched to Calais without seeking farther advantages. But Burgundy, though he had lost two sons in the action, had his army of followers unbroken; whilst the captivity of the duke of Orleans, and the death of the constable and other leaders, left their side destitute. The activity of count Armagnac sufficed, however, to rally and support the party. He was appointed constable; and he still held possession of Paris, and kept the Burgundians at bay. The Parisians, wearied with the tyranny of the Armagnacs, regretted their infidelity to the cause of Burgundy. Count Armagnac, who saw their fickleness, redoubled his cruelties, and resolved to repress treason by terror. Nevertheless, some of the citizens opened one of the gates of Paris to the Burgundians in the night. The Armagnacs were routed; the count himself, and his principal supporters, were seized and imprisoned. The butchers and all the Burgundian rabble that had been exiled returned, and vengeance on the Armagnacs became the general cry. Those suspected of favouring the Orleans party were massacred. The prisons, full of unfortunate victims, were forced by the populace, and all found within were slaughtered. When the populace had got possession of the Châtelet, the prisoners were summoned one by one, and as they issued forth their heads were struck off. Four bishops and two parliamentary presidents perished in this sanguinary prelude to scenes that disgraced the same spot at a period nearer to our times. Count Armagnac himself did not escape. After massacreing him, the Burgundians cut from his body an *escharpe*, or sash of flesh, in derision, a white sash being the emblem of the Armagnacs. The pen shrinks from exciting disgust by detailing the horrible cruelties committed.

The reader is, no doubt, surprised at the total silence of the church amidst these feuds: but the power of the popedom was divided and nullified at this period by a schism; and rather unfortunately, for there never was a period during which its authority might have been used with greater advantage to the public peace.

Henry V. returned to follow up his victory. He made himself master of Normandy; Rouen surrendered to him in January, 1419; and he thence advanced towards Paris. These successes of a foreign enemy naturally tended to unite the adverse parties. That of Orleans had now at its head Charles the dauphin. He was the fifth son of Charles VI. that had borne this title, his four elder brothers having died successively. Charles was a mere stripling, surrounded by the old captains of the Armagnacs, who, under cover of a reconciliation in order to repel the English, meditated to satisfy their private revenge upon the duke of Burgundy. A conference was agreed on between the duke and the dauphin. They were to meet on the bridge of Montereau, each attended by ten knights. The duke was repeatedly warned not to trust himself to his enemies; but it was remarked, that, since the massacre of Paris, he seemed infatuated, and that he had lost his usual activity and prudence. He had no sooner bent his knee before the dauphin, than Tanneguy du Chatel pushed him down, and struck him with his axe: the blow was followed up by others; and the duke of Burgundy fell murdered at the feet of the dauphin, who did not deny his participation in the deed. Thus John the Fearless encountered a fate similar to that which he had inflicted on his rival and nephew, the duke of Orleans.

Never was crime more impolitic. Paris became irreconcilably hostile to the dauphin. Philip, the young duke of Burgundy, thought but to revenge his father; and, hastening to Henry V., tendered to him the crown of France, with the promise of his utmost aid to support his claim. The treaty of Troyes was soon after concluded between them, queen Isabel acting and signing for the king. By this treaty, Henry V. espoused Catherine, the daughter of Charles VI., and was to succeed to the throne of France, the government of which immediately devolved on him as regent, pending the incapacity of the king. The duke of Burgundy did homage to

Henry for his fiefs, and acknowledged him his future sovereign. The magistrates, the people of Paris, and the states-general assembled, were witnesses and parties to the treaty; nor did they murmur to see the kingdom conveyed to a stranger, so profound was their hatred of the dauphin and the party of Orleans. Henry V., however, did not live to wear the crown of France; he expired at Vincennes, in August, 1422. The helpless Charles VI. survived him nearly two months.

There is no progress to record; no institutions took birth during this melancholy reign: civilisation, in a moral view, much retrograded; in a political view, made no advance. A total want of principle or rational motive was equally observable in the individual and in the mass. The sentiment of patriotism was utterly extinguished; and with it the *esprit du corps*, the spirit of caste or class, which gives vigour to the social frame, and which, in a rude age especially, is far preferable to that baser spirit of party, which consists not in principles or political views, but in a mere blind attachment to individuals or families, to a badge or a name. Church and king, aristocracy and democracy, fade from the scene as the reign of Charles VI. advances. The Burgundian, indeed, for a brief space, gives to his cause a popular colour, but soon ceases to affect this, or even recollect it. The burgesses and nobles themselves become too much absorbed in the quarrel, to form a third or a national party. The *nation*, splitting itself to abet personal feuds without a single principle or true interest at stake, continuing them from that savage love of vengeance and that eagerness to retaliate crime by crime which characterise the most barbarous and unformed state of human society, disappears, and becomes extinct. On the contrary, the parties both of Lancaster and York were obliged not only to flatter the people, as Burgundy commenced by doing, but to sanction their privileges and to amend the abuses of government; and thus England, either from her compactness, public spirit, or better fortune, acquired at a critical period an immense

advantage over her neighbour in the race of political civilisation.

France was now openly divided between rival monarchs. The infant Henry VI. was proclaimed in Paris, and all the northern parts of the kingdom obeyed his uncle, the duke of Bedford, as regent. The countries south of the Loire acknowledged Charles VII., the late dauphin, a youth of affable manners, amiable, and naturally weak in character. Adversity, remedying the latter defect, had rendered him prudent, crafty, and even bold; for with the slaying of the duke of Burgundy he commenced his career. Whenever the pressure of his foes relaxed so as to allow him tranquillity, he manifested that love of pleasure which was the characteristic of the house of Valois. He could not indulge, however, in the prodigality of his uncles: the difficulty with which, at this time, he even furnished his table is recorded. He rather inclined to the pursuit of gallantry, the most venial of kingly vices.

By his enemies Charles was called, in derision, "the little king of Bourges," from the town in which he chiefly resided; and so low had fallen his prospects and resources, that this raillery to him must have had all the bitterness of truth. Such were the neglect of discipline and want of confidence in the French, since the day of Azincourt, that he placed small reliance on them. Soldiers were solicited from Milan and from Scotland. The earl of Buchan had arrived with 5000 or 6000 of his countrymen to aid the dauphin, before the death of the late king. He had defeated the English at Beaujé, where the duke of Clarence was slain. Charles was so delighted with this first success of his cause, that he created the earl of Buchan constable of France. These advantages did not continue. A body of Scotch and Spaniards, in the service of the dauphin, was defeated at Crevant. At Verneuil a general engagement took place between the English under the duke of Bedford, and the united French and Scotch under the count de Narbonne and the earls of Douglas and of Buchan. The

French abandoned their custom of drawing up in separate lines. Both armies gathered in a mass, the English flanked by their archers, the French by Lombard horse. The Lombards appear to have been successful, but soon abandoned fight for pillage. The mass of both armies charged together, and there ensued a furious *mêlée*, which lasted an hour. The French were routed. Harcourt, Aumale, and Narbonne, as well as the earls of Douglas and Buchan, were slain.

This was a dreadful blow for Charles: not a town north of the Seine held out against the duke of Bedford; and it was apprehended that, should he attempt to cross that river, Charles was without an army to oppose him. Fortune interfered, however, at this time, interrupted the successes of the English, and finally broke off that powerful alliance with Britany and Burgundy which rendered them masters of the north. Jaqueline, heiress of Hainault and Holland, had been given in marriage by the duke of Burgundy, her feudal guardian, to the duke of Brabant; she was a woman of spirit and beauty, and soon began to despise her husband, who was a feeble character. She left him, fled to England, obtained a nullification of her marriage vow from pope Martin, and married the duke of Gloucester, brother of the duke of Bedford, and his colleague in the regency. Gloucester claimed his wife's heritage of Hainault, and raised an army to support his pretensions; thus expending in his private cause the resources which might have been employed for the subjugation of France. Still worse than this, the claim brought an English prince in hostility with the duke of Burgundy, who supported his vassal of Brabant. Charles about the same time won over the duke of Britany from England, through the means of the count De Richemont, his brother; this prince had been taken at Agincourt, and had conceived a mortal hatred to the English. The king gave him the office of constable, vacant by the death of the earl of Buchan; and in return for this, the count detached Britany from the interests of England. These

ill-timed quarrels and crosses checked the progress of the duke of Bedford, who was obliged to return to England; and Charles VII., in his retreat beyond the Loire, enjoyed a couple of years' respite from the attacks of his formidable adversaries.

Yet the interval was not occupied in defensive preparations, but in those petty intrigues and struggles for power which haunt even the shadow of a court. Charles was much given to private friendship: this, which is a virtue in ordinary life, proved a vice upon the throne; and the stern warriors, or the proud nobles, who would not stoop to win the personal affection of the monarch, looked with eyes of hate on those who did. The new constable, above all, could not bear a rival; and the king, who liked not his domineering character, always offered one to him. De Giac, the favourite, was surprised and carried off by order of the constable, who put an end to his life by drowning. The king could not exist without a private friend: he accepted one from the constable, in Louis de la Tremouille, whom Richemont soon found to be a rival and an enemy as troublesome as Giac.

The English at length resolved to strike a blow that should decidedly crush the hopes of Charles. They laid siege to Orleans, the principal town and support of his party, its chief and last strong hold. Charles now felt that the struggle was for his crown. His bravest captains flung themselves into the place, and every exertion was made for a vigorous and successful resistance. The enterprise undertaken by the English was arduous. Orleans, washed by a broad and rapid river, could not, but with great difficulty, be invested. The earl of Salisbury first endeavoured to carry it by assault, but was slain by a stone from an engine. Lord Suffolk, who succeeded him, undertook the hopeless task of a blockade; but as the town was always free to ingress and egress, at least of warriors, this operation was rather a campaign than a siege. The bastard of Orleans, La Hire, and Saintraille, were the heroes of the French.

As the war ceased to be civil and grew national, heroism and military talent sprung up. By the acknowledgment of their own historian, the French learned skill and discipline from their enemies. The three French leaders, with John Stuart, constable of the Scotch, attacked an English convoy under sir John Fastolffe: they were routed; and the Scotch, with their leader, were slain to a man. It being time of Lent, the convoy was of *herrings*, and the action is known by this name. The English still retained their superiority, and Orleans was not likely long to hold out, when a personage, entrusted, according to popular belief, with a celestial mission, came to pluck courage from the hitherto stout hearts of the besiegers, and give it, with all the enhancing force of superstition, to the French.

This was Joan of Arc, a native of Domremi on the Meuse, whose low condition, that of tending oxen, could not stifle an enthusiastic and devout temperament. Prophecies floated about the country that a virgin could alone rid France of her enemies. Similar prophecies respecting children and shepherds had prevailed during the crusades, but had not proved fortunate. At an early period these prophecies had fixed the attention of Joan. In her lonely way of life, her imaginative spirit dwelt on them; they became identified with her religious creed. During the state of ecstasy which devotion causes in persons of such sensitive and enthusiastic character, aught that flatters or exalts self is grasped with wild avidity; so closely is mortal baseness allied with our aspirations after immortality. It could not but occur to Joan, that she might be the object of these prophecies; it was but a short and flattering step for her credulity to suppose, to believe, that she was. The idea was bright and dazzling;— she gazed upon it;— it became the object of her constant meditation. When we see that ill success or contradictory events can seldom dissipate illusion in such cases, how strongly must her successes have confirmed hers! The prophecy, too, was one that realises itself. To inspire confident hope of

victory was the surest way to win it; and this she effected. Never, by human means alone, was miracle wrought more effectually or more naturally.

Joan won first upon a knight to believe, at least not to contemn, the truth of her mission; which was to deliver France from the English, to raise the siege of Orleans, and bring Charles to be crowned at Rheims. Her credit soon extended from knights to nobles. Charles himself, in that crisis when men grasp at straws, still dreaded the ridicule of being credulous, and the danger of meddling with sorcery; a priest re-assured him. The simple, modest, and pious conduct of Joan herself gained upon the monarch, and even upon his warriors. She was provided with armour, attendants, troops; and in this train entered Orleans. The besieged were elated beyond measure; the English, whom her fame had already reached, were proportionally cast down. Superstition was then the ruler of men's minds, the great dispenser of hope and fear; the immediate hand of providence was seen in every event. The world did not comprehend, nor could it have been reconciled to, that long chain of causes and effects which separates, it might be said which exiles, us of this day from heaven, and renders the Deity, like his Platonic shadow, careless and uncognizant of human destinies.

Joan soon sallied forth against the English entrenchments. Already, since the rumour of her presence, they had abandoned the offensive, and even allowed a convoy of provisions to enter the town between their posts. The inactivity of superstitious terror was attributed to Joan's magic influence, and became morally infectious. Suffolk was driven from each of his bastilles, or wooden towers, successively. A fort held by sir William Gladesdale made the most stubborn resistance. In vain, for a day's space, did the flower of the French continually renew the assault; Joan herself led them, when she was transfixed by an arrow; she fell, and a woman's weakness for an instant showed itself:—she wept; but this paroxysm of sensibility was akin

to that of devotion. Her visions came, her protector saint Michael appeared; and, if we are to believe the testimony of the French knights, she got up and fought till the gallant Gladesdale was slain and his fort taken. The English immediately raised the siege. Joan, having accomplished so considerable a portion of her promises, would not allow the enemy to be pursued.

The gratitude of Charles was proportionate to the benefits he had received. He no longer doubted the divine mission of his preserver. A fresh victory gained over the English at Patay, in which Fastolffe showed a want of courage, and the gallant Talbot was made prisoner, greatly increased the confidence of Charles. Joan proposed to conduct him to be crowned at Rheims. It was distant; many strong towns, that of Troyes for example, intervened, all garrisoned by hostile troops. Still Joan prevailed and kept her word. Troyes surrendered, and Rheims also, where the coronation of Charles VII. fulfilled the mission of the maid of Orleans. Paris itself was next attacked; but this was too hardy an enterprise. Joan was wounded in an assault upon the gate and boulevard St. Honoré, and the French were obliged to retreat. The exploits of Joan were drawing to a term; she was herself aware, and hinted, that much longer time was not allowed her. She was taken by the English as she headed a *sortie* from Compiegne. Her capture was considered tantamount to a victory: it was one, however, replete with dishonour to the English. They bound and used every cruelty towards the hapless maid of Orleans; raised accusations of sorcery against her, whose only crime was man's first duty, to make a religion of patriotism. With all the meanness and cruelty of inquisitors, they laid snares for her weakness, and employed every effort to shake her confidence in her own purity and virtue. She yielded a moment under their menaces and false promises, through exhaustion and hunger, but she always rallied back to courage, averred her holy mission, and defied her foes. She was burnt in the old

market-place of Rouen, "a blessed martyr" in her country's cause.*

In Joan of Arc the English certainly destroyed the cause of their late reverses. But the impulse had been given, and the crime of base vengeance could not stay it. Fortune declared every where and in every way against them. In vain was Henry VI. brought to Paris, crowned at Nôtre Dame, and made to exercise all the functions of royalty in court and parliament. The duke of Burgundy, disgusted with the English, became at last reconciled to Charles, who spared no sacrifice to win the support of so powerful a subject. The amplest possible amends were made for the murder of the late duke. The towns beyond the Somme were ceded to Burgundy, and the reigning duke was exempted from all homage towards the king of France. Such was the famous treaty of Arras, which restored to Charles his throne, and deprived the English of all hopes of retaining their conquests in the kingdom. The crimes and misrule of the Orleans faction were forgotten; popularity ebbed in favour of Charles; the prudence and success with which he had retrieved his fallen fortunes augured well for the firmness and wisdom of his reign. One of the gates of Paris was betrayed by the citizens to the constable and Dunois. Willoughby, the governor, was obliged to shut himself up in the Bastile with his garrison, from whence they retired to Rouen. Charles VII. entered his capital, after twenty years' exclusion from it, in November, 1437. Thenceforward the war lost its serious character. Charles was gradually established on his throne, and the struggle between the two nations was feebly carried on, broken merely by a few sieges and enterprises, mostly to the disadvantage of the English.

* Among the memorials of the defeat of the English preserved in France, was a statue erected to Joan d'Arc in Orleans, and a rich banner taken from the earl of Warwick at the siege of Montargis, which the inhabitants of the latter town were accustomed to bear in procession every year. At the commencement of the Revolution, however, as Anquetil informs us, it was considered unworthy to celebrate triumphs over England, the "classic land of liberty;" Warwick's flag was burned at Montargis, and the men of Orleans threw down the statue of the Pucelle. In six months after (adds he) the two nations were at war.

This return to order, this removal of civil discord and a foreign enemy, restored to action the natural springs of the political machine. The king, resuming his power, gradually exerted it in ordonnances; the nobility, or rather the princes of the blood, began to unite and present remonstrances to the monarch. With the view of forming an aristocratic party, the duke of Burgundy procured the release of the duke of Orleans from captivity, and a reconciliation took place between them, which gave such umbrage to Charles, that he forbade the latter to repair to court. A conspiracy was soon after formed between the princes and La Tremouille against the constable: Louis the dauphin, afterwards Louis XI., joined in it. The activity of Charles, however, anticipated the treason. The dauphin was obliged to make submission. His friend, the bastard of Bourbon, was tried, condemned, sewn up in a sack, and drowned. The other planners of this disturbance, called the Praguerie, were pardoned.

The church, too, was roused from her long slumbers, but appeared inclined rather to limit than renew her usurpations. A council was then assembled at Bâle, which was anxious to correct the most flagrant abuse of the popedom by limiting its power. Notwithstanding the opposition of the reigning pontiff, they decreed divers propositions, which they forwarded to king Charles for his adoption. The king held an assembly of nobles, peers, prelates, and magistrates, and by them the decrees of the council were accepted. They ordained, that a general council was superior in authority to a pope; they deprived the Roman pontiff of the right of appointing to benefices, ruling that vacancies should be filled up by the ancient mode of election. Annates, or first year's revenues, were forbidden to be paid to the pope: appeals to him were limited, almost prohibited; and papal bulls were declared of no authority in the kingdom without the monarch's consent. These, drawn up under the title of Pragmatic Sanction, similar in name and spirit to the Pragmatic Sanction of St. Louis,

secured for many years the liberties and independence of the Gallican church.

There had been frequent endeavours and conferences towards a peace between the French and English. The demands on either side proved irreconcilable. A truce was however concluded, in 1444, which lasted four years; it was sealed by the marriage of Henry VI. with Margaret of Anjou, daughter of Réné, and grandaughter of Louis, who had perished while leading an army to the conquest of Naples. Such were the early graces and talents of the young princess, afterwards so unfortunate, that, instead of receiving a dowry with her, Henry gave the county of Maine to her uncle. The truce embarrassed Charles by the quantity of troops, which it was difficult to pay and dangerous to disband. Austria was loudly calling for aid against the Swiss. The opportunity was seized of getting rid of the most turbulent of the bands. The dauphin Louis led them to Bâle on his march to the mountains of Switzerland, and Burchard Mönch, a renegade Swiss, and an envoy of Austria, was to guide the way. The free mountaineers, nothing alarmed by their new enemies, and ill appreciating their force, despatched 1600 men against the 20,000 of the dauphin. The little band in advancing were warned by the people of Bâle of their rashness. "Our souls, then, to God, and our bodies to the Armagnacs," replied the gallant Swiss; "for we must on." They attacked the immense army of the dauphin, and routed the two advanced divisions of it; but, deserted by the militia of Bâle, and surrounded by numbers, all were slain. The battle of St. Jacques, as this was called, gave to the French the first experience of Swiss valour. The dauphin thought proper to prosecute the war no farther. Mönch, the Swiss who had guided the French, rode over the field of St. Jacques after the action, and enjoyed the sight of his slaughtered foes and compatriots. "We shall sleep to-night on roses!" exclaimed he, exultantly. The exclamation roused to life the indignant spirit of a captain of Uri, who lay mortally wounded: he collected his remaining strength,

lifted a huge stone, and throwing it at Mönch, dashed to pieces the eyes and face of the traitor, who soon after expired.

The French king was wearied with the expense attending the troops he had hitherto employed, and with their want of discipline. All were gentlemen, forsooth; the very archers rode on horseback, and were followed by valets. The militia of the towns formed the only infantry; and they, from their nature, could absent themselves from their callings but for a short campaign. Charles resolved to imitate the English, by training the country population to arms. He, first of the French kings, dispensed altogether with the feudal mode of raising forces, and established a regular and a standing army. He formed what were called companies of ordonnance, of which there were fifteen, each commanded by a captain, and consisting under him of 100 lancers and men at arms; each man at arms followed by three archers, a valet, and a *coutillier*, or short-sword man, similar to those formerly called *brigands*, who used to penetrate amongst cavalry in confusion, slaying men and horses with their knives. In addition to this, the king soon after ordered that each village of the kingdom should furnish its most expert archer, who was to be paid in time of war, and in peace was to be exempt from *taille* or tax. These were the *franc archers*, an important institution, which armed the peasants and called them forth, not at their lord's bidding, but at the king's.

These reforms were a principal cause of the disaffection among the nobility, of which the dauphin took advantage to disquiet his father. Charles, however, now that he was triumphant over the external enemies of the state, no longer stooped to compromise differences with internal foes. He caused the duke d'Alençon, a prince of the blood, to be arrested, for having formed a secret alliance with England: the duke was tried and condemned. Charles kept him ever after in confinement. Prince Louis retired to his government of Dauphiny, and continued his intrigues and reclamations. The king mani-

fested equal spirit and forbearance. He was ready to pardon his son, but never to submit or concede to him.

In 1449 the truce was allowed to expire. The quarrels of York and Lancaster had commenced, and England was unable to defend her foreign possessions. Normandy was invaded. The gallant Talbot could not preserve Rouen with a disaffected population, and Charles recovered without loss of blood the second capital of his dominions. The only blow struck by the English for the preservation of Normandy was at Fourmigny near Bayeux. They had been successful in driving back the count of Clermont, when the constable appeared with a fresh army, attacked the English in turn, and routed them. In the result of this action, Charles saw clearly the advantages of his reform in the army. Native French archers here faced their ancient rivals. Normandy was for ever lost to the English after this action or skirmish. The following year Guyenne was invaded by the count de Dunois. He met with no resistance. The great towns at that day had grown wealthy, and their maxim was to avoid a siege at all hazards. Thus Bordeaux, after having summoned the English by their public crier to come to their assistance,—a voice as likely to be heard by the battling Yorkists and Lancastrians as if it had been trumpeted in their isle, — surrendered to Charles. The submission of the Bordelais was, however, but short. They rebelled; the veteran Talbot came to their aid, at the head of 5000 English. The French were engaged in the siege of Castillon, when Talbot marched against them. His first approach drove in the *franc archers*. This success emboldened him to attack the entrenched camp of the French. Though now eighty years of age, Talbot on foot led his men at arms to the assault. The fight was bravely sustained on both sides, till the English general was struck down by the fire of a culverin. His son, lord Lisle, flung himself on the body of his parent. "Fly, my son," said the expiring Talbot; "the day is lost. It is your first action, and you may without shame turn your back to the enemy." Lord Lisle,

nevertheless, together with thirty nobles of England, was slain before the body of Talbot. With that hero expired the last hopes of his country in regard to France. Guyenne was lost, as well as Normandy; and Calais remained to England the only fruit of so much blood spilt and so many victories achieved.

Charles VII. reigned nearly ten years after he had thus completed the conquest of his kingdom. During that time the perverseness of the dauphin chiefly occupied and plagued him. When the king advanced into Dauphiny against his son, the prince fled to the court of the duke of Burgundy, who received him with hospitality and kindness. The duke himself had a similar cause of uneasiness in the frowardness of his son, the count of Charolois, afterwards Charles the Rash. However, the young count's turbulence was but the effervescence of passion and hot temper; that of the dauphin was cold-blooded, unrelenting, and full of guile. The two young princes formed an intimacy that afterwards broke out into rivalry and hate.

King Charles had seen so much of the licence and spirit of insubordination of great towns, that he always avoided to sojourn there. The burgesses of Paris, especially, rigid in their ideas of domestic virtue, looked with evil eyes upon the monarch's gallantries, and even insulted the beautiful Agnes Sorel, who has redeemed in the eye of history her degradation as Charles's mistress, by her patriotism, and by the zeal she displayed in rousing the monarch from pleasure to the active duty of recovering his kingdom. Agnes, called *demoiselle du roi*, was the first of the subsequently long and disgraceful list of king's mistresses. For the above reasons Charles resided at remote châteaux, far from the capital, — an example followed by his successor. This rustication of king and court was attended with important consequences, and was not the least of the causes that contributed to render absolute the royal authority. Charles suffered from an abscess in the mouth at one of these retreats, Meung-sur-Yèvre: word was secretly brought to him that an

attempt was to be made to carry him off by poison. Possessed by this idea, he refused all sustenance for several days; and when the physicians used force, the action of the stomach could not be restored. He expired on the 22d of July, 1461.

Charles VII. is represented in history as a weak character, for whom fortune and friends did every thing. Yet, had the record of his youth been lost, we should esteem him the most politic, the most firm, the most valiant of princes. His chief weakness was, that he seemed willing to reconcile himself to adversity, and even to amuse himself under its pressure. He was not of a nature stubborn enough to struggle against a driving tide; but when it became somewhat favourable to him, he was alert and sagacious to take it at the turn, and it triumphantly bore him on to fortune. In no reign was such progress made by the kingdom in the acquisition of force, solidity, and order, though not of freedom. One enactment principally produced this effect: it was that which re-organised the army. Not only was a standing force created by this means, but a standing revenue also. The financial part of the regulation, though apparently subordinate, was by far the most important. The companies of ordonnance, or cavalry, were paid by a *taille* levied on towns. And this tax, from its evident utility, being universally submitted to, placed in the hands of the government a revenue, which was afterwards raised, increased, and applied at pleasure. Charles VII., according to Comines, never levied more than 1,800,000 livres in the year. His successor increased it to 4,700,000. This tax, imposed by the royal will, was the cause of the extinction of freedom in France. No votes of money being required, the states-general became useless: they were never summoned; a shade of their dignity was transferred to the parliament, which affected to represent them; and all their legislative functions were usurped and exercised by the monarch. No writer of the present age could express himself with more indignation on this subject, or with a

fuller sense of its injustice and evil consequences, than Philip de Comines, the historian of that day. The French nobles, says he, consented to this *taille*, for the sake of pensions granted to them out of the sums levied in their respective domains. Henceforward the French gentleman held and supported the maxim, that the king alone had the right of levying taxes without the consent of the subject; a principle the reverse of that which was maintained in England by all the classes of the community. Here, then, did the two countries diverge into different paths; the one towards despotism, the other to constitutional freedom.

CHAP. V.

1461—1515.

FROM THE ACCESSION OF LOUIS XI. TO THAT OF FRANCIS I.

THE rivalry between the French and the English formed the chief action of the period which we have just traversed. During that time the political regards of France were directed northwards. She had few relations with the kingdom separated from her by the Pyrenees. Italy was almost equally neglected: despite the claims of the house of Anjou upon Naples and Sicily, which were enforced neither by alliances nor by arms. The king, separated by Burgundy from the dominions of the emperor, seldom, if ever, extended his views beyond the Rhine. The monarchy was struggling on its own soil for its existence. Now, however, we enter upon another period, when, delivered from the hostile weight of England, increased and united in territory, its powers and resources placed at the disposal of an absolute sovereign, France began to seek conquests and enemies beyond her own limits. She turned her views south towards Italy, whither the French monarchs were carried by their pri-

vate claims and passions, rather than by the interests or wishes of their people. It was during these wars that the great states of Europe found themselves, for the first time, interested in the same struggle, and in the immediate relations of either alliance or enmity with each other. During this ensuing period, therefore, was formed that European confederacy which still exists, and of which the republics of ancient Greece offer, on a diminutive scale, the only prototype.

Louis XI. was at the court of Burgundy when he heard of his father's death. The duke, who had always afforded him hospitality and protection, now showed the submission of a subject; he did homage to the new king for his possessions, and proposed to accompany him to Rheims with his court and army. The suspicions of Louis made him dispense with the attendance of the latter. The duke and the Burgundian court alone were present at the coronation.

The new king was of an ungainly and ill-favoured person, with large head, small limbs, and an unprepossessing deportment. Consciousness of those defects made him contemn personal qualities in general, as well as those who prized them: thus he despised courts and courtiers, knights and tournaments; he shunned men of noble and princely rank—choosing in lieu of them, for his ministers and officers, people of low birth who displayed talent, and who could be attached and submissive. His first acts showed more self-will than prudence: he felt great indignation against the counsellors of his father; they were all obliged to fly, and Louis carried his resentment so far as to annul the political acts of the late reign. Thus he repealed the pragmatic sanction, and sought to restore to the pope the right of nominating prelates; but his parliament resisted, and Louis soon after abandoning all his selfish resentments, the law against clerical usurpations remained in force. The same contrariety to his father's opinions and measures contributed to bind the king in gratitude to the duke of Burgundy, and in friendship to the duke's son

the count of Charolois: but this soon gave way to the jealous and encroaching temper of Louis. He sought to levy the *gabelle* tax in Burgundy. The duke sent his ambassador, De Chimay, to protest. "Who is this duke of Burgundy?" exclaimed the king; "is he of a different metal from the other nobles of my kingdom?" "Yes, sire," replied De Chimay, "he is of a very different metal; for he alone amongst them received and supported you, when you excited and fled from the anger of king Charles, your father." "How dared you use such language to the king?" exclaimed Dunois to Chimay. "Dared!" said the Burgundian; "I tell you, were I fifty leagues off, and thought the king had an idea of using to me the words he has used, I would have returned to answer him."

Duke Philip was now in years, and age had robbed him of his wonted firmness and sagacity. Louis found that in personal interviews he could soothe, persuade, and wheedle the old duke; the king, therefore, paid frequent visits to the court of Burgundy, during which he effected many of his schemes. One of them was the recovery of the towns on the Somme, Amiens, Abbeville, and St. Quentin, which had been mortgaged to the duke for a large sum. Louis paid it, and recovered possession. The son and heir of Burgundy, the count of Charolois, was highly enraged at these intrigues of the king and the weakness of his father, and great enmity sprang up between the prince and the king of France.

Almost all the great nobles were discontented with Louis. A despot from natural character as well as from policy, self-willed, jealous alike of rivalry or control, his continued efforts had been directed to humble them. He had stripped them of all their influential offices, their commands, their pensions. The duke of Bourbon was deprived of the government of Guyenne; the count Dunois found himself a cipher at court, without place or power; other nobles were in prison. Louis intrigued against the duke of Britany, against the prince of Burgundy, and he even despatched an emis-

sary to seize and carry off the latter. The nobility, universally malcontent, united against the king, who was alarmed when he saw the storm about to burst. Louis hurried off on a pilgrimage to some shrine, always his first resource when in difficulties; sought to intimidate the duke of Britany; and at length marched to crush the weakest of the leagued princes, the duke of Bourbon. In the mean time the king's brother, the duke of Berri, made his escape, and joined the army of the league: Proclamations were scattered, addressed to the people, complaining of the tyranny and faults of the government, and declaring that the nobles had taken up arms, "*solely for the public good.*" Hence this war was called "the war *of the public good.*" The king on his side issued counter-manifestoes; and this appeal, the first instance of the kind, made by both sides to the people, shows the growth of the commons in respectability and importance, although they were shut out from political power.

Whilst the king was in the Bourbonnais, the count of Charolois led his army before Paris, and passed it, in order to intercept Louis, who was returning to the defence of his capital. The two armies met at Montlheri; a skirmish commenced; and aid coming to both parties, the action became general. The king defeated the wing of the Burgundians opposed to him; and Charles, equally successful on his side, was engaged in hot pursuit when he was recalled by the news of his partial defeat. The long peace had destroyed warlike habits and skill; and the generals knew as little how to command as the soldiers how to fight. The king succeeded in his purpose of entering Paris, and a treaty was concluded, in which he yielded to Burgundy the towns on the Somme for which he had paid so dearly. The government of Normandy was given by Louis to his young brother the duke of Berri; and towns, domains, in short all that they demanded, to the other princes. The count of St. Pol, general and friend of the count of Charolois, was created constable by

Louis, not without some hopes of exciting jealousy between him and Burgundy by so rich a boon. Thus, as Comines remarks, was the war of the public good turned and terminated to *private* advantage.

The king, however, had yielded solely to the pressure of circumstances. He ceded every thing; aware that, as soon as the league was dissolved, he should find means of recovering all that had been wrested from him. Thus, in the following year, having won over the duke of Bourbon, Louis took Normandy from his brother, and deprived the duke of Britany of all his advantages. Duke Philip of Burgundy had died in the mean time; the count of Charolois, known in history as Charles the Bold, or the Rash, was his successor. The new duke was wroth against the king, on account of the non-execution of the treaty, and menaced war. Louis, who had a high opinion of his own address, and who remembered that he had always soothed and won the good will of duke Philip in personal interviews, resolved to try the the same means with duke Charles. The constable St. Pol, who negotiated between them, and was anxious for an accommodation, represented the duke's temper and demands as less extreme than they were. The king requested a safe conduct, and galloped, with few followers, to Peronne, where the duke of Burgundy then held his court. He was received with all outward deference, yet had reason to suspect that the enmity of the duke was much deeper than had been represented to him. His enemies were numerous, and in favour at the duke's court; and some troops, under the command of the marshal of Burgundy, his declared foe, were encamped near Peronne. The king, beginning to be alarmed, demanded to have his head-quarters removed to the castle. In the interview of the next day Louis found that he had over-rated the duke's flexibility, as well as his own address; it was impossible to bend him, or win a single concession. Meanwhile tidings arrived that the people of Liege, stirred up by the emissaries of the king, had rebelled; had seized their bishop and the duke's lieute-

nant, and had committed many atrocities; report added that the bishop had been slain: the truth, however, was that an archdeacon, who was the prelate's standard-bearer, was the principal person murdered. Charles flew into a rage at this news; he declared that the king had come thither to lull him into false security, whilst his intrigues excited rebellion in his dominions. The gates of both the town and the castle were instantly ordered by him to be closed. Shrinking, however, from the act of imprisoning his sovereign, the duke pretended that these measures were taken merely for discovering a casket of jewels that had been lost. Charles had now the fate of the kingdom in his power: the monarch was his prisoner; and such was the bad faith of Louis, as well as the general hatred borne to him, that to deprive him of his crown would have been an act neither unpopular nor wholly unjustifiable. The duke of Berri, the brother, whom Louis had just deprived of Normandy, might ascend the throne: a messenger, prepared and booted, was in readiness to bear a message to this prince; but duke Charles hesitated: he wanted courage or decision for so serious a step. Anger inflamed and inclined him to listen to vengeance. His sage and prudent counsellor, Comines (the historian of the period), soothed his ire, and recommended an accommodation. Charles could not sleep with irresolution; he would not retire to rest, but continued for the whole of the third night pacing up and down his chamber. At length he became calm, and consented to release the king, provided Louis would accompany him against the Liegeois, whom he had stirred up. The king, who passed days and nights of melancholy and anxious suspense, confined in a tower in which a count of Vermandois had murdered Charles the Simple, was glad to obtain release on any condition, however galling; and he accordingly marched in company with Charles against the mutinous burgesses of Liege. These unfortunate men offered to submit, but Charles would not listen to them. They were worsted in an attempt to surprise the duke and the king; their

city was taken by storm, and suffered all the pillage and massacre practised on such occasions. After having thus been an involuntary witness of the destruction of his allies, Louis was allowed to depart.

It had been agreed at Peronne, that the duke of Berri should have the government of Champagne, in lieu of Normandy, of which he had been deprived. Champagne being on the borders of Burgundy, the prince would have had always a ready support in the duke against the king. This reason made the monarch as unwilling to grant Champagne as Charles was inexorable in demanding it. Louis offered to his brother the province of Guyenne in lieu of Champagne; and by gaining the prince's favourite he succeeded in making him agree to the exchange. It was upon this occasion that the king discovered the treachery of one of his ministers, La Balue, the son of a tailor, whom he had raised to the dignity of cardinal. His ecclesiastical character saved his life; but Louis confined him in an iron cage, in the castle of Loches, for the rest of his days.

The blunder which the French king committed in trusting himself to the duke of Burgundy was the thought uppermost in his mind: to have been outwitted was more galling than a substantial loss to him, who prided himself in his sagacity, and whose power was founded much upon his character for wisdom. He never would allude to the treaty of Peronne, nor would he bring himself to utter the name, ordering his serjeants to wring off the necks of some poor jays, that had been taught to cry "Peronne" in derision. Pretexts for war against Burgundy could not be wanting. In the quarrel then raging between the factions of York and Lancaster, Louis and Charles espoused different sides, which led to mutual recrimination. The king feared, however, to combat singlehanded against so potent an adversary. An intrigue which alienated, or appeared to alienate, from the duke many of his allies, emboldened the king to declare war. Duke Charles had an only child, Mary,

his daughter and heir: she was eagerly sought by the king's brother, late duke of Berri and Normandy, now duke of Guyenne. Burgundy, who was chagrined by the prospect that his rich inheritance might pass into the hands of another race, would by no means promote this marriage, though he did not object to the suitor. The duke of Guyenne urged the king to war, hoping that Burgundy's distress would compel him to grant his daughter's hand in order to obtain friends and aid. The constable St. Pol excited the king against duke Charles for the same reason, also for the sake of the emolument and importance of which peace deprived him. War was declared. The count de St. Pol won St. Quentin for the king by treachery; and Amiens was lost to the duke by the same means. A truce followed, in which Charles and Louis communicated with each other, and found they were both tricked by the constable. A complicated intrigue ensued; the duke of Burgundy consenting to give his daughter to the duke of Guyenne, provided that he, with the duke of Britany, the constable, and Edward of England, would unite against the king. Louis was here well nigh over-reached for the second time. To appease Charles, who advanced with a powerful army, he agreed to give up Amiens and St. Quentin, as also the constable, to the duke of Burgundy; the latter abandoning his allies, the dukes of Britany and Guyenne. Both determined not to execute the part of the treaty which was disadvantageous to them. Charles wrote to the dukes of Britany and Guyenne, declaring that he would not abandon them. Louis either extricated himself, or was extricated, from all difficulties respecting his brother, by the death of that prince, which took place suddenly and opportunely. A poisoned peach, which was presented to him, and of which he himself and his mistress partook, occasioned the death of both. Louis, who always compensated a crime by a signal act of piety, invented on this occasion the angelus, or mid-day prayer to the Virgin. After such a passage of history as the foregoing, one may be permitted to doubt

that Italy was the original birthplace of political treachery and intrigue. Machiavel, by whose writings France is supposed to have become infected with duplicity and the habitual dereliction of all public morals, was only born about this period; and truly Louis XI., the constable St. Pol, and even the headlong Charles of Burgundy himself, seem personages most qualified to afford a lesson to the Florentine secretary himself.

The death of the duke of Guyenne broke off the treaty. Charles was enraged, and entered Picardy, ravaging and massacring the population by way of revenge. His cruelty here acquired him the name of Charles the Terrible. He was repulsed, however, in an attack on Beauvais. A woman named Jeanne Hachette was the first to give the alarm, and to repel the Burgundians. An annual procession, in which females take precedence, still subsists in memory of her valour. A truce concluded the campaign.

It was manifest, that either from want of military hardihood and skill, or from the lukewarmness of soldiers and commanders, a decisive blow could not be struck between France and Burgundy. Both parties grew weary of bringing armies into the field to no purpose; and although nominal war and real enmity subsisted, the rival princes had leisure to turn their views in another direction. Louis was at variance with the king of Aragon respecting the province of Roussillon, which he held by a species of mortgage, and which the Aragonese had attacked. A compromise was effected, the province being divided between the competitors. But the object to which the French king chiefly applied himself was the humbling and punishing of his refractory nobles. The duke of Alençon was thrown into prison, and his duchy confiscated: the count of Armagnac, grandson of the famous constable, was next aimed at; but, shut up in Lectour, he defied the power and vengeance of the king. The royal troops besieged the place, and its reduction was found impracticable: terms were therefore offered to the count. During the

negotiation the besieged relaxed in their vigilance, and the king's general treacherously attacking, Lectour was carried, and the inhabitants were massacred. Two officers suddenly entered the apartment where the count and his countess were sitting. The former saluted them. They replied by striking the count, and putting an end to his life. His unfortunate wife, saved for the moment, was found to be *enceinte*. To her a potion was administered to destroy in embryo the heir of the house of Armagnac; and it also proved fatal to the countess.

The duke of Burgundy was weary of playing the subordinate part of a feudatory of France. He surpassed the king himself in wealth and power, and yet was curbed and humbled in dignity by a suzerain, and especially by Louis, who took every opportunity to thwart and encroach upon his overgrown vassal. To conclude a treaty which should define the duties and at the same time guard the independence of the latter was impossible. Charles, seeing no other way to extricate himself from this awkward and mortifying state, aspired to sovereignty. He hoped that by extending his dominions on the side of Germany he might be able to renounce his subjection to France, and induce the emperor to acknowledge him as an independent sovereign. The bribe by which he hoped to influence that potentate was certainly a great one: it was the hand of his daughter and heiress Mary, who, if united to Maximilian, the emperor's son, would convey to the house of Austria the extensive territories of Burgundy. By purchase Charles obtained the duchy of Gueldres, as also the county of La Ferrette and a part of Alsace, from the duke of Austria. He meditated to seize upon Lorraine, of which the last duke of the house of Anjou had died without heirs. Réné count of Vaudemont pretended to the succession of that duchy in right of his mother, daughter of Réné d'Anjou. The people of the province preferred him to the duke of Burgundy, and opposed the latter, who failed in getting possession of

the town of Metz. Still Charles pursued his ambitious schemes. An interview took place between him and the emperor Frederic, in which the duke was to have been declared king of Belgic Gaul, and lieutenant-general of the empire: Charles, however, here defeated his own views by his ostentation and finesse. The emperor and his ministers were disgusted with both. Charles wished to have his title acknowledged ere he allowed his daughter to be betrothed; and, whilst he held out stubbornly on this point, the emperor departed abruptly without leave-taking. Thus did Charles over-reach himself. All the rich regalia that he had prepared to honour his new dignity became useless.

The duke of Burgundy resolved not to be wanting in the pride and arrogance of a monarch, though the title was denied him. His new empire was to include the whole course of the Rhine from its source. Sigismund duke of Austria abandoned to him willingly those claims of sovereignty over Switzerland which he himself could not make good. Hagenbach, Charles's governor in his new province, used every species of extortion and violence towards the Swiss; and the duke, when appeal was made to him, offered insult in lieu of redress. "We must skin this bear of Berne," said he, "and clothe ourselves in his fur." While causes of irritation between the duke and the Swiss formed a prelude to war, and while the enmity of the latter towards Louis still continued so inveterate that an alliance was formed between him and Edward of England for conveying the crown of France to the latter, Charles and Louis came to a momentary understanding for the sake of avenging themselves on the constable St. Pol, who had betrayed each in turn, and was equally odious to both. The constable, who had possessed himself of St. Quentin, made overtures to both parties, and offered the town to make peace with either. He had an interview with the king on the bridge of Noyon, with a wooden barrier raised between them, which was adduced as a criminal piece of arrogance on the part of St. Pol. He afterwards fled to

the protection of Burgundy; but the duke delivered him to the king, who caused him to be tried before his parliament, and afterwards beheaded in the Place de Grève.

Edward IV. was induced to invade France by the duke of Burgundy, who, instead of joining with the English, kept his troops employed in the conquest of Lorraine. Edward, who loved pleasure even more than glory, was bought off by Louis, who observed on the occasion, that no sum could be ill expended in bribing the English to keep within their isle.* "As to money, that can be regained," said Louis; "but never will I yield up towns or lands to such enemies." He at the same time treated with the Swiss, paid them subsidies, and even succeeded so far in exciting enemies to Burgundy, that he reconciled those free mountaineers with the house of Austria, and united both in league against the duke. The inhabitants of La Ferrette were excited to rebel against Charles's lieutenant, Hagenbach, whom they took and beheaded. The Swiss aided the insurgents, declared war against the duke, and defeated his troops at Hericourt.

Charles of Burgundy had never yet encountered an enemy superior to him. The gallant knights of France and the stubborn burgesses of Flanders had alike been quelled by him in the field. His rage was proportionate to his surprise on finding himself braved by the Swiss mountaineers. He marched against them from Lorraine, the conquest of which he had completed, at the head of 40,000 men. Charles's natural pride of character was inflated by the study of the Roman classics, the taste for which was just then reviving and superseding that for feudal romance. The reader must be aware that the fall of the Greek empire and the invention of printing were events anterior to this period by some years, and had contributed to render even more

* Six hundred pipes of excellent wine formed part of the bribe which tempted Edward upon this occasion: this caused many railleries against the English.

known and popular the names and achievements of Rome. Hannibal was the hero whose prowess then caught the fancy of Charles; and to surmount the Alps, like the Carthaginian general, was now his glorious aim. The patriotism and valour that armed the Swiss in their own defence was equally enthusiastic, though unlearned and indigenous. Still they sent envoys to avert the wrath of Burgundy, and to offer amends and submission in return for justice. "You have little to gain with us," said the Swiss ambassador to the duke; "the golden bits of your bridles, the spurs of your knights, are more in value than all our land contains." The duke would neither listen to counsel nor hear of submission. He marched into Switzerland through the valley of the Arve, in the month of February, 1476. He besieged Granson, the first place that made resistance. The garrison, though brave, were tricked by a renegade Swiss called Ramschwag, then in the duke's service, to surrender. They were in number about 500. Charles instantly ordered them to be put to death; some were hanged, some drowned. This cruelty exasperated the Swiss. Each canton furnished its contingent, and an army of 20,000 men marched against the Burgundians. The duke had a strongly entrenched camp at Granson, but scorning such advantage against the Swiss peasants, he advanced to meet them on the road to Neufchatel; thus offering battle in a hilly region, where his numerous cavalry could prove of no advantage. The two armies met on the 2d of March. The Swiss foot, embodied in large masses, and armed with long halberds, bore down the Burgundian knights, who in vain resisted. Charles had a few archers, and no infantry in the advance; thus committing the usual mistake of the French, in deeming mounted gentlemen able to repel twice their number of peasants on foot. The Burgundian flank was soon turned by other bands of the Swiss mountaineers, amongst whom the huge and terrific horns of Uri and Unterwalden were heard to blow. The battle became instantly a rout: the Burgundians and their duke fled;

losing, indeed, few of their numbers, as the Swiss had no cavalry to pursue, but leaving to the conquerors the plunder of a camp which rivalled that of Xerxes in luxury and splendour. Silken tents attached with cords of golden wire, velvets, tapestry, pearls, and jewels in profusion, became the property of the amazed victors. Plate was flung away as pewter. The large diamond which the duke wore customarily at his neck was found in a box of pearls; it was at first rejected as a bauble, then taken up again, and sold for a crown. It was afterwards purchased by the pope for 20,000 ducats, and still adorns the papal tiara. Another equally beautiful diamond, won at Granson, was bought by Henry VIII., afterwards given by his daughter Mary to her husband, Philip II., and now belongs to Austria. As duke Charles fled from the Alps and their fierce inhabitants in the rout of Granson, his fool cried to him, "Ha! my lord, are we not finely Hannibalised?"

The king of France had taken up his residence at Lyons, in order to watch the motions of the duke and to profit by his reverses. One of Charles's schemes for aggrandisement was to induce René d'Anjou, who was dissatisfied with Louis, to make a bequest of Provence and his other possessions in favour of Burgundy. René had shown himself obsequious in this respect, as did the duchess of Savoy and the duke of Milan; but on the disaster of Granson all the allies of Charles forsook him, and Louis secured to himself the rich succession of the house of Anjou, then about to be extinct: he at the same time encouraged the Swiss with subsidies and fair words.

Charles was during this period at Lausanne, recruiting his shattered army. He was so dreadfully dejected, that he allowed his beard to grow; and, though constitutionally of that hot temperament which forbids all vinous indulgence, his chief refection being conserve of roses, yet he now took copious draughts of wine to drown and dissipate his chagrin. By degrees, however, he remoulded his army, recovered his spirits, his cou-

rage, and almost his confidence; and in June of the same year, three months after the defeat of Granson, Charles marched with a fresh army into the heart of Switzerland. He encamped at Morat, within six leagues of Berne, and instantly invested the place. The Swiss collected their forces and marched to its relief. Réné de Vaudemont duke of Lorraine had now joined his aid to theirs, and brought them what they most wanted, a formidable body of cavalry. The force of the Swiss exceeded 30,000: the duke's force was scarcely so numerous, and was far inferior in confidence and hardihood; but, like a desperate gamester, he would play his stake although every chance was against him.

The captains of Burgundy counselled Charles to lead his force into the plain, where his cavalry might act; but he was now impatient of dictation. Near the lake of Morat he stationed his left, chiefly composed of Italian mercenaries; the centre was commanded by Crèvecœur; he himself kept the right, with a body of English under the duke of Somerset, and his archers on horseback. The Swiss, as was customary with them, knelt down in line, uttered a short prayer, and then rushed against their enemies. On this occasion the redoubtable infantry of the mountains were kept in check by the Burgundian knights, fighting under cover of their artillery and camp entrenchments. The action was for a time doubtful; but the cavaliers of Burgundy having all dismounted to defend their entrenchments, the Lorraine horse swept the right wing; and a body of Swiss, being thus enabled to turn it, attacked the camp in flank and rear whilst it was still vigorously assaulted in front. Cannon and entrenchments here became useless; the struggle was hand to hand. Somerset and his English, together with the best knights of Burgundy, perished; and victory was completely in the hands of the Swiss: they were merciless in their triumph; they took no prisoners, and spared not an enemy. All were massacred; and the vanquishers being now provided with cavalry, the flight was more destruc-

tive than the action. Many sought refuge in the lake; and even thither they were pursued by their merciless enemies. The Swiss were resolved that the Burgundians should not rally a second time, to attempt a third invasion. "Cruel as at Morat," was for a long while a Swiss proverb. When time had decomposed the bodies of the slain, the bones were collected in a chapel called the Ossuary of Morat, which for ages remained as a trophy to Swiss valour and independence. The French revolutionary army destroyed it in 1798.

Charles escaped this field also, and for a long time concealed his grief and mortification at Salins. Like Napoleon in his reverses, neither humbled nor schooled, but merely angered by ill fortune, he called on his subjects for levies, for armies; not to secure their safety, but to avenge his own disgrace. Every where, in Burgundy as in Flanders, he found discontent and lack of zeal. Réné de Vaudemont seized the opportunity of recovering his heritage of Lorraine: though he was unable to raise an army, yet such was the discouragement of the Burgundians that he still met with success; and Nancy, the capital of the province, surrendered to him. This roused the duke of Burgundy; he quitted Salins, and with such force as he could muster, amounting to about 6000 men, laid siege to Nancy in October of the same fatal year, 1476. Réné de Vaudemont flew to the Swiss, his allies and comrades, for aid. Although interest and gratitude urged them to support him, still the soldiers of the confederacy would not stir till large payments and larger promises were made to them. This barter of their valour for gold is the great blot on the Swiss character. Charles in the mean time was losing his temper and his little army before Nancy in vain, during one of the most rigorous winters ever known. It was not till January, 1477, that Réné with his allies could come to the relief of the town. Charles was counselled, in the present weak state of his army, to avoid his formidable enemies; but he scorned to retreat. He was attacked by the Swiss and by Réné, in a me-

lancholy day of snow and frost. The knights of Burgundy here for the last time supported their character for valour; but when the dreadful horns of Uri and Unterwalden sounded, the courage of the duke's infantry succumbed. Campo-Basso, who commanded the veteran auxiliaries, had turned traitor to his master. Men appointed by him set the example of flight: treachery is supposed to have consummated the destruction of the unfortunate duke. Charles was several days missing; at last his corpse was found, stripped and scarcely recognisable, half immersed in a frozen pool. Thus in one brief year did the potent house of Burgundy fall from its pride and perish. It struck against the rock of Swiss freedom and went to pieces;—a fruitful theme for reflection to the men of that age, although its writers took care to draw from it none save a pious moral.

Louis, who had not long before established regular posts throughout his dominions, was soon informed of the death of his rival and enemy. He could scarcely conceal his joy; yet his doubt and irresolution were great. The most obvious policy for the king to follow, was to secure the espousal of Mary, the late duke's daughter and heiress, to his son Charles, or to one of the princes of his house.

But Charles the dauphin was at that time only eight years of age; and a marriage, the consummation of which must necessarily be for a long time retarded, seemed insecure. As to the marriage of Mary to a French prince, the duke of Orleans for example, Louis dreaded and avoided such a measure. He had too dear experience of the danger of raising nobles, especially of the blood royal, to territorial dignities and power. He, consequently, preferred seizing on the heritage of the deceased duke by force. Burgundy and Artois, the king pretended, must revert to the crown as male fiefs. Of the former he obtained possession, by gaining to his interests the prince of Orange, the principal nobleman of the duchy. The towns on the Somme, as well as Boulogne, Arras, and Tournay, surrendered to him.

But his efforts to raise royal partisans in Flanders were unsuccessful.

Mary heiress of Burgundy was at Ghent, under the care of the duchess her step-mother, at the time of her father's disaster. The turbulent citizens took possession of their infant duchess, re-established their privileges, and seemed resolved to administer the province in her name. Louis had sent his barber Oliver as envoy to Ghent. Being a Fleming by birth, Oliver was derided and threatened: he was obliged to make his escape. Mary, however, wrote clandestinely to the king, showing herself not indisposed to a marriage with the dauphin. The states of Flanders, assembled at Ghent, sent ambassadors at the same time to treat with the monarch, who was then engaged in the siege of Arras. For the sake of embroiling the young duchess with the people of Ghent, Louis not only showed but gave her secret letter to him. The envoys were enraged at discovering this secret correspondence: the citizens participated in the feeling. There was a tumult; and two of Mary's counsellors were executed by the people upon the public scaffold, though she caused herself to be transported thither in hopes of saving their lives. She conceived on this account a just hatred both against France and Louis; and, after various intrigues, Mary espoused the archduke Maximilian of Austria, son of the emperor.

War ensued between Maximilian and Louis. Burgundy revolted under the prince of Orange. The Flemings defended Artois. The English were invited to attack their ancient enemy; but the principal lords and ministers of Edward's court were in the receipt of annual pensions from Louis, who remained secure on that side. The only memorable exploit of the war was a battle that took place at Guinegate, between the Flemings under Maximilian, and the French commanded by Philippe de Crèvecœur, an old general of the late duke of Burgundy. At the commencement of the action, the French cavalry routed that of their enemies, and drove

them from the field. The infantry on either side remained on their ground; but the Flemish burgesses were far superior to the French *franc archers*, and advancing, routed them with ease. The previous success of the cavalry yielded no advantage, and the Flemings gained a decided victory.

It was after this defeat that Louis abolished the institution of *franc archers* altogether; he disliked the fashion of arming the French peasantry. Instead of requiring from each village an archer, Louis levied a certain sum, with which he proposed to pay an army of Swiss. The French infantry, still maintained, was armed by him after the Swiss fashion, with pike, halberd, and two-handed sword. At any rate, a change was universally taking place, by which the arquebuss superseded the bow and arrow.

The defeat of Guinegate humbled the hopes of Louis. The war was no longer prosecuted with vigour. Even the death of Mary of Burgundy, which soon after took place, afforded him no opportunity of adding to his usurpations. A treaty, called the treaty of Arras, was concluded between him and Maximilian, in December, 1482. Its stipulations were, that the dauphin Charles should espouse Margaret of Austria, Maximilian's daughter; and that France should acquire, as her dowry, the county of Artois, and that of Burgundy (or Franche-Comté), with other territories; those possessions reverting to Austria in case no heirs came of the marriage. Independently of these cessions, Louis acquired the duchy or province proper of Burgundy, as well as that of Picardy, as his share of the spoils of Charles. About the same time, on the death of the good king Réné, he inherited Provence and Anjou. Réné II. of Lorraine made some efforts to establish a claim, but in vain. Good fortune never crowned political craft more completely than in the instance of Louis XI. That monarch had now brought all his favourite schemes to their completion: his nobles were humbled; his great rival was destroyed. He still gave his restless spirit occupation in the chase.

Retired in his castle of Plessis — removed altogether from his family — without a court — isolated even from his ministers, who inhabited the neighbouring town of Tours, — he amused himself in his domain with agriculture: he established a Flemish dairy, and gave his royal attention even to the making of butter. Executions, of which he was equally fond, mingled with these more innocent amusements; and Tristan the hermit, his provost, was one of his most constantly occupied attendants. An anecdote of the king's summary justice is told by Brantôme. Once, when in public, he perceived a certain captain whom he knew to be ill affected to him. The monarch winked to his provost: Tristan thought that the object of the king's justice was a fat monk who stood next to the captain; accordingly, the good monk was forthwith seized, sewn in a sack, and flung into the river. The captain, who saw the mistake, had in the mean time fled to Amiens. The king reproached Tristan, who avowed the error. "Pâques Dieu!" exclaimed the monarch; "'twas the best monk in my dominions. Let half a dozen masses be said for him to-morrow."

The hand of the great executioner was at length laid on Louis, who showed all the alacrity of his most timid victim to avoid his fate. He made numbers of pilgrimages, and was incessant in his vows. It was said that he had recourse even to earthly aid, and drank blood drawn from the veins of infants, to revive the failing current of his own. He was twice struck with apoplexy: the last attack proved fatal to him. Louis died on the 30th of August, 1483, having survived his contemporary Edward IV. of England but a few weeks.

The union of oddness with sagacity forms a mixture of human character, which, by a perverse kind of taste, we like to contemplate. Such a specimen of this combination as Louis XI. exhibited was never seen upon a throne. Although he was as tyrannical, as crafty, and as cruel, as our Henry VIII., still the French king is almost a favourite with the reader of history, whilst Henry is abhorred. Louis possessed a *bonhommie*, a comic humour,

which has thrown his atrocious cruelties into the shade. His very absurdities plead against an unfavourable judgment; and in smiling at the weaknesses, we almost pardon the iniquity, of his nature. That strange contrast of profound sagacity in all sublunary concerns, with the childish folly and pusillanimity in ideas of religion and celestial influence, which were pretty much the characteristics of the age, was carried, in Louis, to the farthest verge of all that can provoke ridicule or command admiration. His crimes, also, were partly those of the age; and, in a political view, they were scarcely more than proportioned to the great end that the monarch contemplated. Such a compound of weakness and wisdom, policy and superstition, cowardice and courage, joined with all that is strange in person, manner, habiliments, thoughts, makes Louis a character ready drawn to the hand of the imaginative writer. It defies exaggeration, and rivals in boldness and humour aught that fiction can create.

The son of Louis XI. was but thirteen years of age when he ascended the throne, with the title of Charles VIII. Brantôme calls him Charles the Little: he was weak, ill-formed, and sickly; his mind was not more developed than his person, the jealous Louis having denied the young prince all education as well as exercise. The last dispositions of Louis had entrusted the care of the king to his daughter Anne, wife of the lord of Beaujeu, a brother of the house of Bourbon. She found a competitor in the duke of Orleans, who, as first prince of the blood, pretended, at least, to share the sovereign authority. The principal nobles espoused the duke's side. It was agreed to summon the states-general to decide the question. No mention has been made of the great council of the nation during the last reign. It had been held nevertheless, but the members had been so packed and culled as to offer no efficient resistance to the despot who reigned. A fair and real assembly of the states was now, however, convoked at Tours. The government used every means of previous conciliation. Oliver the

barber, one of the obnoxious ministers of Louis, was hanged; taxes were reduced; and a body of 6000 Swiss was disbanded. The disorders of the reign of Charles VI., and their melancholy consequences, had disgusted men with the reign of princes of the blood. The states conferred the care of the king's person, and the influence accruing from it, upon the lady of Beaujeu. The Orleans party, being dissatisfied, questioned the competence of the states. "To whom does it belong to decide," cried Pot, one of the members, "if not to the same people who first elected their kings, and in whom the sovereign authority thoroughly and territorially resides?" Here breaks out the republican spirit which the revived study of the classics had already produced.

The three orders presented their several grievances; and we have thus an opportunity of marking the state of each. It has been before remarked, that the French noblesse became at an early period divided into the greater and the less; the former possessing territories, apanage, sovereignty, almost independent power; hereditary qualities, in short, more royal than aristocratic. This took from them the true spirit of an aristocracy; they opposed the king, as potentate might attack potentate, with force alone. Arms and fortifications were their bulwarks. The English nobles, on the contrary, from the compactness of the island and the early despotism of the Conqueror's race, remained essentially subjects, all with similar interests and views. Hence they were united; hence they aimed at common privileges, which laws and institutions alone, not individual might, could guarantee. As the great nobility disappeared in France, either from natural decay, or by chance of war, or under the hand of the executioner, the princes of the blood took their place and authority: and thus a class of magnates was placed at the head of the noblesse, having interests quite distinct from theirs. From that time opposition and rebellion no longer strove to limit the royal authority. The struggle of the nobles, on the contrary, was to share it, to have a seat in the council,

and acquire preponderance. In these selfish and personal quarrels, nation and class both lost sight of their peculiar interest as well as of the public advantage. But the danger of giving apanages was soon perceived. Princes and nobles were no longer indulged with provinces: places and *pensions* were bestowed in lieu. Charles VII. had begun this system; and he was enabled to do so, being the first monarch who levied a fixed and perpetual tax. In this arrangement, the great nobles were to have a share in the public contribution, while the smaller, forming the great mass of the nobility, were to be exempt from paying their quota. Thus were all those of higher birth in the nation attached to despotic royalty by the simple and stubborn tie of self-interest. The demands of the nobles in the present assembly of states were merely against being summoned by the *arrière-ban* to war at their own expense. Louis XI., who found that they paid no *taille* under the modern system of collecting revenue, thought they might at least afford their ancient contribution of feudal service. But no: they insisted upon being freed from both, and they were freed.

The clergy prayed that the pragmatic sanction might be upheld, and the privileges of the Gallican church defended, especially the right of election, and the non-payment of annates. The tide of opinion even among ecclesiastics was against Rome. Striking examples occurred during the reign of Louis, showing how low the papal authority had fallen. When Charles of Burgundy aspired to a throne, it was not to the pope, that anciently received fabricator and hallower of crowns, that he had recourse, but to the emperor. When cardinal Bessarion came on a mission from the papal court to Louis XI., he was admitted, after a delay of two months, to the royal presence. When he had made a most learned speech richly garnished with quotations, the king for answer seized the venerable cardinal by the beard, and repeated an absurd line from the Latin Grammar of that day. Bessarion, it is said, died of chagrin at this in-

sult; and we hear of no indignation on the part of the pope.

The *tiers état*, or commons, were equally loud against the pope, and prayed that no legate should be allowed to enter the kingdom. They made the usual complaint respecting the *taille*, and solicited the abolition of so hateful a word. They hinted, that if the royal domains could not suffice for the national expenditure, they would be ready at all times to come forward and vote supplies. Considerable difficulties nevertheless existed as to the sum now to be granted. In short, the states seemed most willing to adopt the economical resistance of an old English parliament, when the lady of Beaujeu, growing alarmed, dissolved the assembly.

The discontent of the duke of Orleans was not appeased by the decision of the states. He was a handsome, frank, amiable man, not naturally inclined to be turbulent: but as first prince of the blood, and heir presumptive to the throne, it was derogatory to his pride and spirit to remain tranquil, while deprived of all influence by a woman. Dunois, son of the famous bastard of Orleans, was his chief friend and counsellor; a man as fond of intrigue, apparently, as his stout sire had been of battle. The dukes of Lorraine and Bourbon seemed at first inclined to join him, but both were won over by the lady Anne; Bourbon, the elder brother of the lord of Beaujeu, being made constable. Orleans tried every expedient to shake the authority of the king's sister. He sought to make himself popular in the capital, and to bring its citizens to declare in his favour. He tried the parliament also; but its president, La Vaquerie, replied, that it was not their interest or duty to interfere in a private struggle for power. Orleans was soon after closely pressed by La Tremouille at the head of a superior army, and obliged to make submission; Dunois being banished to Asti, a town in Italy which the duke of Orleans inherited from his grandmother, Valentine of Milan.

Such a forced submission could not conduce to a lasting

peace. Dunois soon afterwards returned from exile. There was a plot for carrying off the king, which failed, and the duke of Orleans was obliged to take refuge in Britany. The gay and fascinating manners of the French prince entirely won the good will of Francis, the reigning duke. He was without male heirs; and his daughter, as inheritor of the duchy, was a rich prize for an ambitious prince. The duke of Orleans became a suitor for the hand of Anne, and duke Francis favoured his pretensions. But the native nobles of the province were jealous of the duke of Orleans and of his influence with their prince. They leagued with the lady of Beaujeu against both; and a French army, supported by a great body of Bretons, soon after besieged the dukes of Britany and Orleans in Nantes. There were two other pretenders to the hand of the heiress of Britany: the sieur d'Albret, a rich lord of Gascony, into whose family the crown of Navarre had passed from that of Foix. The duke of Orleans, in prosecuting his own suit, affected to support this competitor. The other was Maximilian king of the Romans. A timely succour sent by this prince obliged the French to raise the siege of Nantes; and the lady of Beaujeu betraying a disposition to conquer the duchy, and to garrison and appropriate its towns, the Bretons became suspicious, abandoned her, and resumed their allegiance to the duke. The war nevertheless continued. The troops on both sides met at St. Aubin, and a battle ensued. The French were commanded by La Tremouille; the prince of Orange and the duke of Orleans led on the Bretons. With the latter were 300 English; 1200 Bretons also clothed themselves in the English garb, the more to intimidate their enemies. The Bretons were celebrated as foot-soldiers. At St. Aubin they supported their character; but the French gendarmerie, having routed the cavalry opposed to them, took the Bretons in flank and rear, and routed them. The duke of Orleans and the prince of Orange were both taken prisoners. They were startled to perceive a confessor

enter their tent in the evening. La Tremouille, who saw and enjoyed their consternation, reassured them by observing that it was only for the inferior rebels to clear their consciences and prepare for death.

An accommodation followed this defeat. The duke of Britany made submissions, and survived but a short time. He was the last duke of the province, which now descended to his daughter Anne. There was another sister, who, as she died soon after, need not be more than mentioned. Affairs were now as unsettled as ever. The count d'Albret, seconded by a strong party of Bretons, who above all things aimed at the independence of their duchy, pushed his suit with the young heiress. The addresses of this aged noble could not be agreeable to a princess of fourteen. The duke of Orleans, the object of her predilection, was in prison. The armies of France were invading the duchy, and it behoved her to espouse a prince capable of defending her dominions. The resolution was taken that she should be married to Maximilian king of the Romans, and the ceremony was accordingly performed by proxy; the archduke's ambassador, to conclude it, putting a naked leg into the couch of the young duchess. Hitherto the aim of king Charles and his regent sister had been to conquer the duchy by force of arms, laying claim to it as a male fief. Charles had been long betrothed to Margaret of Austria, Maximilian's daughter, who was then receiving her education in the French court, and awaiting the years of nubility. The stubbornness of the Bretons, however, made the lady of Beaujeu despair of her project. The ever-ready Dunois, in order to make his own peace and procure the liberty of the duke of Orleans, proposed that Charles should espouse the young duchess himself, and thus unite Britany to the kingdom. Charles and his sister instantly entered into this scheme. The king, with a kingly generosity, began by setting the duke of Orleans, his secret rival, at liberty. This the monarch did without consulting his sister; nor was his generosity abused, for the duke remained

ever after faithful to him, and even seconded his purpose of espousing Anne. Dunois, on his side, laboured to render the duchess less hostile to France. Anne still held with all the faithfulness of a wife to Maximilian, to whom she was nominally betrothed. An ostensible act of compulsion was deemed requisite to overcome her reluctance. A royal army besieged her in Rennes. One of the conditions of the capitulation was, that she should espouse the king of France. This marriage really as well as ceremoniously took place.* The inactivity of Maximilian lost him a richly endowed consort, and at the same time brought a severe mortification upon his daughter Margaret. She, who had been brought up as the future queen of France, was now sent home, as she herself expressed it, "a widow ere she was a wife." This rejection was not unattended with loss to the French monarch, who was compelled to restore Artois and Franche-Comté, acquired as the dowry of Margaret. Thus, within a short period, were the two most considerable fiefs of the ancient feudal kingdom of France, viz. Burgundy and Britany, united finally to the crown. Flanders, the remaining province, followed other fortunes; for while France gradually extended her dominions eastward, by encroaching on the empire, the house of Austria gained possession of the rich province of Flanders, originally French, which gave her the advantage of seaports, and one of the richest manufacturing and commercial regions in the world.

There never was a period of history in which the efforts of individual minds were so important in their effects as the present. The inventions of one or two artisans on the banks of the Rhine presented mankind with the art of printing; — an idea, a theory, springing up in the manly mind of Columbus, led to the discovery of another hemisphere; — a whim conceived by Charles VIII., who, from hearing tales of Cæsar and Charlemagne, suddenly became desirous of turning conqueror, had more effect on the destinies of Europe than all

* Dec. 1491.

those occult causes of human progress which the philosopher of history loves to fathom. It has been related, how the first house of Anjou conquered Naples, and how Jeanne, its last princess, conveyed her right to Charles of Anjou, brother of the unfortunate Charles VI. His right descended to his grandson Réné, who bequeathed it to Louis XI. In short, the claim of the reigning house of France to Naples was such as only a powerful monarch could assert. An illegitimate branch of the royal house of Anjou was then in possession of Naples. There was enmity between him and Ludovico Sforza, who then governed Milan. The latter, in the meddling spirit of Italian intrigue, sent ambassadors to excite Charles of France against the king of Naples; but the French king, instead of menacing or intriguing, entered seriously into the project, summoned his bravest soldiers and captains, and invaded Italy at the head of a large army. No one was more surprised and alarmed at this promptitude, to which Italy was so little accustomed, than Ludovico himself, whose authority in Milan was merely usurped over his nephew, then in prison. He temporised, however, and received Charles with all signs of gladness, and with great display. Most historians of the time describe the pomp and grandeur of his reception; and the rich habiliments of the duchess of Milan are not forgotten. The first act of Charles on his introduction to this dame was to ask her to dance with him. This gallant example was followed by the French, who were prodigal of admiration and attention to the fair. Such conduct awakened the suspicions of the Italians, and added to the natural want of harmony between nations so opposite in character.

Italy at this time formed a federation which may be regarded as the prototype of the system subsequently established in Europe, where power is equally parcelled forth, and where the efforts and policy of all are directed to preserve the general equilibrium. The intervention of a foreign potentate perplexed and terrified all the members of that implied confederation: but to unite at

once against him demanded a reciprocal confidence, a readiness and resolve, which were not to be expected. Those who could venture on such an act of policy, temporised. To await another conjuncture of circumstances was the favourite and timid maxim of the Italians. The Venetians replied to Charles, that they were in too great dread of the Turk to aid him. The Florentines, through whose state lay the route between France and Naples, could not follow this example of neutrality: Pietro de' Medici, the man of chief influence among them, knew not what path to pursue. He had an understanding with both Charles and the king of Naples, and was afraid to oppose or to desert either of them. Being sent at the head of an embassy by the Florentines to procure the king's friendship and alliance, he delivered up the frontier fortresses to Charles, to gain the monarch's good will for himself, thus setting aside the interests of the republic. The pusillanimous traitor was soon after obliged to fly from the public indignation. Meantime Charles entered Lucca and Pisa. Florence opened her gates to him, without surrendering her independence. Charles, however, attempted to take advantage of having an army within their walls to impose conditions upon the Florentines. When these were proposed by Charles to the principal magistrates of the town, Capponi, one of them, snatched the injurious scroll from the hands of the secretary, tore and trod it beneath his feet. "Since such are your conditions," cried he to Charles, "sound your war trumpets, we on our side will ring the bells of alarm." Such promptitude and courage in an Italian functionary made Charles conclude that the Florentines were too strong for him. Capponi was recalled, and reprimanded for his wrath, but the harsh conditions were no longer insisted on.

The pope Borgia, Alexander VI., stood next in Charles's way. He in vain endeavoured to turn the French monarch from his purpose of entering Rome, but the latter asserted that he had vowed to visit the tombs of the holy apostles. The terrified pontiff shut

himself up in the castle St. Angelo whilst Charles entered the city in the night by torchlight; his men all armed, with lance in rest, betokening that he came as a conqueror. In the present day, when a place is won the flag of the victors is hoisted. The first order of Charles was to erect gallows in divers directions, on which his provost hung a few turbulent Romans, thus asserting and exercising the French king's right of jurisdiction. Naples itself seemed equally disinclined to resistance. Although Ferdinand, its young prince, showed himself not wanting in either prudence or valour, his troops betrayed an insurmountable reluctance to face the French. They fled from their posts at the first indication of attack. Ferdinand escaped to Ischia; and Charles made his triumphant entry into Naples, in the month of February, 1495; having thus traversed all Italy at the head of an army, without any bloodshed except by the hand of the executioner.

To retain and perpetuate conquests is a more difficult matter than to make them. Charles and his captains took no pains to establish their government in Naples: on the contrary, the partiality of the French monarch for his countrymen, his dissipation and restlessness, as well as their gallantry and violence, rendered the Italians averse to their yoke. The king of Aragon in the mean time leagued with the Venetians and Ludovico Sforza of Milan, to drive the French from Italy. Philip de Comines, then Charles's envoy at Venice, warned him of the danger. It was considered most prudent to return to France. Gilbert de Bourbon, count de Montpensier, cousin of him whom we have known as lord of Beaujeu, was left governor of Naples. Garrisons were placed in the chief towns. And thus providing for the security of his new kingdom, Charles departed on his return homeward at the head of scarcely 10,000 combatants. His enemies awaited him near Parma, commanded by Gonzaga, marquis of Mantua. They were more than double the French in number. Charles endeavoured to negotiate, but in vain. Gonzaga posted

his men near Fornova, to the right of the road which must be taken by their enemy, who, commanded by La Tremouille and their monarch, did not retard their march. The Italians, divided into two bodies, attacked the French in front and rear. Those in front showed little activity; the rear-guard was, however, vigorously assaulted by the marquis of Mantua. The French made a valiant resistance. Charles himself was exposed to considerable danger, as he fought in the midst of the action. The Stradiots, who formed the infantry of the marquis, forsook the combat in order to plunder the French baggage. The knights and cavaliers of Charles took this opportunity to charge and beat in the Italian cavalry, which soon fled. Thus a partial victory remained to the French. They had the honour of encamping for that night on the disputed field. The next morning, however, they continued their retreat; nor did they allow themselves repose until they reached Asti, where the duke of Orleans was to have awaited them with reinforcements. That prince had, however, made use of the troops under his command to attack Milan. He was now shut up in Novara. Charles, instead of receiving support, was obliged to march to the duke's aid. His liberation was effected by a treaty with Louis Sforza. Charles returned to France, and the north of Italy relapsed into its usual state of quiet vigilance.

Meantime Ferdinand was recovering his kingdom of Naples from the French, who had been left to guard it. His first attempt was, however, unsuccessful. He passed over from Sicily into Calabria with 5000 men under Gonsalvo de Cordova, known in Spain by the name of the great captain. Stuart count of Aubigny, great grandson of the Scotch constable killed at the fight of Herrings, marched against Gonsalvo, defeated him, and Ferdinand escaped with difficulty. This prince, not discouraged, soon returned with a fleet, showed himself before his capital, which rose in his favour, and expelled the count de Montpensier. War, however, still continued, from the pusillanimity of the Italian troops,

Ferdinand and Gonsalvo both fearing to encounter the French in the open field. Charles made an effort to succour his partisans in Naples. An army was raised, and the command of it given to the duke of Orleans; but this prince, observing the weak state of the king's health, refused to enter on a distant expedition at a time when he might be suddenly called to the throne. Montpensier, thus abandoned, saw his forces gradually diminish: he himself was shut up in Atella, and soon after obliged to surrender upon conditions, ill observed by Ferdinand. Stuart of Aubigny made good his retreat to France with his troops. Montpensier died soon after of a malady which carried off numbers of the captive French.

Thus terminated in defeat all the ambitious schemes of Charles, all his dreams of rivalling the fame and conquests of Charlemagne. His sons perished in infancy one after the other; the name of the last, Charles Orlando, marking the favourite studies and thoughts of the monarch. In the spring of 1498 a game of ball, which interested the king, was played in the fosse of the castle of Amboise, where he resided. Charles, an affectionate husband, brought the queen to witness it. Passing in haste through the low archway of a gallery, he struck his head somewhat violently against it; for the moment the blow did not seem to affect him, but soon after he was seized with a stroke of apoplexy, and died at the early age of twenty-seven. "Charles," says Comines, "was of a small person, and little understanding; but a better creature was not to be seen."

The crown of France had now descended from father to son in an uninterrupted succession of seven monarchs from Philip of Valois. Charles VIII. leaving no posterity, the direct line was broken. Louis duke of Orleans, he who had been murdered by his uncle of Burgundy, left two sons, the duke of Orleans and the count of Angoulême. The former, one of the captives of Azincourt, and long a prisoner in England, was the father of the prince who now ascended the throne as Louis XII. The count of Angoulême also left a son,

cousin-german of course to Louis, and now heir presumptive: he afterwards became Francis I. Whilst engaged in royal genealogy, we may glance at the house of Bourbon. The sieur or lord of Beaujeu had became duke of Bourbon by the death of his elder brother; his issue was limited to a daughter. The male heir to the duchy was Charles of Bourbon, count de Montpensier, son of him who had defended Naples for Charles VIII., and who had died in that capital. By the intervention of the new monarch, the young Charles count de Montpensier married Susanne de Bourbon, thus preserving united the titles and heritage of this illustrious family.

Louis XII. formed in person a contrast to his predecessor. He was tall, agile, strong, and equally accomplished in the exercises and graces of knighthood. He had sustained all those fevers in his youth that spring from a quick and generous temper. He had been dissipated, extravagant, turbulent. Like our fifth Harry, he discarded these vices ere he ascended the throne, and a similar spirit of forgiveness marked his accession. When some of his courtiers urged him to disgrace La Tremouille, the general who had defeated him at St. Aubin, Louis replied, "The king of France must not remember the injuries offered to the duke of Orleans." His first step was one strongly urged by policy, as well as private affection. He had been compelled by Louis XI. to espouse that monarch's daughter Jeanne, a princess deformed in person though amiable in disposition. Through the pope's dispensation, as well as by the decree of a commission, this marriage was broken, though poor Jeanne pleaded with all the eloquence of injured womanhood against it; and Louis married the widow of his predecessor, to whom, as Anne of Britany, he had formerly paid court. Thus was secured an important province, which the duchess might have carried to another suitor.

This great point settled, Louis published a number of ordinances regulating and new modelling the army, the revenue, and the judicature. In his former capacity

as a subject, an oppressed and malcontent subject, he had made himself acquainted with the defects of the system, which, as a king, he now applied himself to remedy. The council of state, among others, he re-modelled, filling it with the sage and experienced of all ranks. Poor Philip de Comines, who had intrigued and suffered captivity for the duke of Orleans, was now, however, slighted by the king. Louis turned his back on the fickle and astute politicians, the old accomplices of his treason, as Harry the fifth forsook the companions of his dissipations. We, however, should be grateful for a neglect which gave Comines leisure to compose a history of his times, less finished, detailed, and clear than that of Guicciardini, but certes far more lively, forcible, and entertaining. The chief authority under Louis was given to George, now created cardinal of Amboise, the first person who ostensibly bore the character of prime minister. Hitherto any attempt of a monarch to delegate his authority was considered pusillanimity and crime; but now, as foreign relations became more extended and more complicated, it was seen that not the weakness of private friendship, but the urgency of the public weal required an experienced and influential minister.

The domestic and internal affairs of the kingdom thus regulated, Louis turned his views towards Italy. He was eager to renew the successes and avenge the defeats of his predecessor. He had not only to support the claims of the house of Anjou upon Naples, but to maintain his own private right to the duchy of Milan, which he pretended to inherit from his grandmother Valentine Visconti. The Sforzas, soldiers of fortune, had usurped the duchy, and founded their right on the marriage of the first Sforza with Blanche, the natural daughter of the last Visconti. Louis XI. had allied with them, and had refused to permit the duke of Orleans to insist upon his heritage. No sooner did the latter become Louis XII. than he assumed the title of duke of Milan, and prepared, by arms and alliances, to prosecute his claim.

Ludovico Sforza had usurped the duchy, and secured it by poisoning his nephew: he was peculiarly hateful to the French, from having been the first to entice Charles VIII. into Italy, and afterwards the first to betray him. His crimes made him equally odious to his countrymen. The pope was won over by the gift of the duchy of Valentinois, which the king gave to his notorious son, Cæsar Borgia. The Florentines were in the French interest, and the Venetians leagued with Louis in order to share the spoils of Ludovico. In short, when a French army entered the Milanese in the summer of 1499, it met with no resistance. The duchy submitted almost without a blow, and Ludovico fled to Inspruck, to his only ally, Maximilian.

The supple Italians, who never failed to stoop their heads under the fury of the French storm, were sure to raise them when the tempest had subsided. Ludovico returned with an army in the ensuing year. The capital rose in his favour. Trivulzio, who had been left governor of the duchy, was besieged in the town-house, and was only rescued by the audacious gallantry of some sixty knights, his followers. The French were obliged to evacuate the province. At the first tidings of the insurrection, La Tremouille marched from France to succour Trivulzio. Ludovico sought to intercept this aid by posting himself at Novara. But when the outposts of both armies touched, the Swiss in Ludovico's service learned that their comrades in the French army were better paid and treated. On the eve of action these mercenaries declared their intention of deserting to the French. Ludovico Sforza used the strongest entreaties to dissuade them; but finding them determined, he merely begged not to be delivered to the enemy. How was he to escape from Novara, in which he was in a manner besieged? The Swiss consented to allow him to mingle in their ranks, clothed as one of their soldiers. Their treachery, however, or the vigilance of the French, discovered the unfortunate Ludovico in the Swiss ranks, as they marched out of Novara. He was taken, and

conveyed to France, where he was confined in the castle of Chinon until he died. Thus Louis, having fortunately made himself master of the person of his rival, subdued for the second time the duchy of Milan.

The conquest of Naples still remained to be achieved; but the present enmity of Maximilian king of the Romans rendered it inexpedient to undertake at present so distant an expedition, which would leave Milan exposed to the hostility of the Germans. This inability to conquer, joined with the impatience to possess, caused Louis to commit an egregious blunder. He formed an alliance with Ferdinand king of Spain, to divide between them the kingdom of Naples, to the exclusion of its reigning monarch, who was of the illegitimate race of Aragon. Louis was to have the better or northern half of the kingdom, the city of Naples included. Ferdinand, who merely wanted a pretext to obtain a footing in the Peninsula, and introduce forces, was to content himself with Apulia and Calabria. Accordingly, Ferdinand sent Gonsalvo de Cordova, and Louis despatched Stuart of Aubigny, each to conquer their respective portions, which they effected; the reigning monarch at first confiding to Gonsalvo, who of course betrayed him. Frederick of Naples, being driven from his capital and kingdom, fled first to Ischia and thence to France, where Louis gave him the duchy of Anjou as a compensation for the loss of his crown.

Conquest is like gambling. The excitement of the game being pleasure greater than even the possession of the prize, the winner is ever driven to venture on a fresh stake. Louis now turned his views towards the Venetians. They had obtained Cremona, Bergami, Brescia, the eastern territories of the duchy of Milan, as the price of their co-operation against Sforza. The king envied them this portion of his duchy, as they hated and feared the newly grown power of a foreign monarch in Italy. He endeavoured to bring Maximilian of Austria to join in an alliance against them; and a treaty was concluded, by which Maximilian promised the investi-

ture of the duchy of Milan to Louis. Maximilian's grandson Charles (afterwards emperor) was to marry the princess Claude, the daughter of Louis. The designs, however, which the monarchs entertained against Venice were interrupted by the bad faith of Ferdinand of Spain, which began to manifest itself in Naples. The agreement by which this kingdom was partitioned between two rival powers, without any fixed line of demarcation, was necessarily rather a source of war than a seal of peace. A great portion of the country's revenue proceeded from the tax on the herds of cattle, which were yearly collected in the plains. Quarrels arose about this, and about the limits of the provinces; and war soon broke out between Gonsalvo and the duke de Nemours, who was viceroy for the French.

Never was a prince more benevolent and wise in his domestic and internal policy than Louis XII.; yet never was prince led astray by ambition to commit greater blunders and injustice than he in his relations with foreign princes. He was now leagued with the Borgias — the father, the execrable pope Alexander VI.; his son Cæsar Borgia, one of the heroes of Machiavel. They betrayed Louis at every turn; crushed and murdered his friends. Still the French king temporised; and in a treaty concluded with them at this period, he agreed to sacrifice to them several of the independent nobility of Italy — among others, the Bentivoglios and the Orsini. One of the causes of this blindness in Louis was the care which the pope took to win the favour of the cardinal of Amboise, the French minister, whom he cajoled in a manner which was afterwards practised on Wolsey, by flattering him with the hope of succeeding to the popedom. The French were at first the strongest party in Naples. Gonsalvo retired before D'Aubigny, and shut himself in Barletta. There were several combats: one, in which the brave La Palisse was taken; another, of thirteen French against thirteen Italians, in which the Italians had the best, although their enemies assert that the advantage was won by

treacherously stabbing the horses of the French knights. The Spanish monarch had recourse to artifice, his usual weapon. Seizing the opportunity of his son-in-law the archduke Philip's travelling through France, he proposed a new treaty to Louis, by which Naples was to be brought as the princess Claude's dowry to young Charles, the grandson of Charles and Maximilian. Louis XII., who seemed as fond of negotiations and treaties as he was certain to be duped in them, gladly and confidently agreed to these proposals. He relaxed in his exertions for reinforcing his army in Naples, while Ferdinand made use of the interval to send potent succours to Gonsalvo. The continued hostilities and successes of this captain, notwithstanding the pacific declaration and arrangement of his master, awakened Louis from his supine confidence. But it was too late. D'Aubigny was beaten by the Spaniards and taken prisoner at Seminara in Calabria, the scene of one of his former victories. On the same day of the ensuing week, the hostile commanders, Gonsalvo and the duke de Nemours, met at Cirignola. It was towards evening, and the Spaniards threw up an entrenchment before their position. The duke de Nemours would not tarry. He ordered an instant attack, which was at first successful. He himself, leading on another to support it, was slain by a bullet from an arquebuss; and his followers failing in the assault, a rout ensued, in which the French army were for the most part dispersed. Naples surrendered to Gonsalvo. Its castle was taken by mining,—a mode of offence invented in these wars. Shortly afterwards, the fortress of Gaeta was the only post in the kingdom that held for the French.

Louis was exasperated to the utmost. He raised armies to attack Ferdinand in the Pyrenees and in Italy; but equally without a result. La Tremouille, the French general, fell ill, and Gonzaga marquis of Mantua, who took the command, from want of either zeal or talent did nothing. The army, too, was delayed near Rome by the intrigues of the pope, and the unwillingness of

the cardinal of Amboise to break with him. The reign of the Borgias was immediately after brought to a tragical close. The pope and his son had invited several rich cardinals, their intimates, to sup with them in a vineyard. The Borgias intended to poison them; and Cæsar Borgia sent some bottles of medicated wine, under the especial care of a domestic, to the spot. The pope arrived first; he was thirsty, and called for drink. The poisoned wine was poured out for him; and his son, coming in at the moment, partook of it. Pope Alexander expired soon after, and his son's life was saved only by means of antidotes and a strong constitution. Great intrigues agitated the conclave. An aged and infirm pope was elected by way of compromise. In another conclave the cardinal of Amboise was not more successful. An Italian prelate was preferred, who soon displayed his imperious, ambitious, and warlike spirit, under the name of Julius II. Cæsar Borgia had contributed to his election, in return for a promise of protection; and Julius showed his gratitude by arresting Borgia immediately afterwards. He escaped, however, and fled to Gonsalvo, who, receiving him with friendship equally insincere, put an end to the career of this prince of intrigue by sending him prisoner to Spain. In the mean time the French army remained inactive for want of a chief. Gonzaga had been driven from the command by the taunts of the French: the marquis of Saluces succeeded him, but with no more success. The campaign served but to display the valour of the brave Bayard, who alone defended the passage of a bridge against a body of Spaniards for a considerable time. Gonsalvo was every where successful; and Gaeta, the last fortress of the French, surrendered in a panic.

The tidings of this ill-fortune, and especially of the loss of Gaeta, so affected Louis that he fell into a dangerous illness. He was tended with exemplary affection by his queen, Anne of Britany. But that prudent princess, seeing his death imminent, despatched much of her valuables to be conveyed down the Loire to Britany.

The heir to the crown, young Francis count of Angoulême, then inhabited, with his mother, the château of Amboise. The marshal de Gié was the chief counsellor and influential man of this embryo court. Over-zealous for the interests of the future king, and deeming Louis past hope, de Gié stopped the valuables of the queen as they descended the Loire past Amboise. Anne never forgave the insult. Louis recovered, and the marshal de Gié was pursued by the vengeance of the queen for years. He was tried; and it is a great proof of the improvement of the judicature, that he escaped with life from so powerful an enemy. This circumstance increased the hatred between the mother of Francis, Louisa of Savoy, and queen Anne. By the last treaty with Maximilian it had been agreed that his grandson Charles should marry Claude, the daughter of Louis, and with her inherit the Milanese. Some time previous to the last illness of the king, Maximilian had sent an embassy to conclude and enlarge this treaty. The monarch was at the time sorely vexed by his disasters in Naples, and greatly enraged against the fickleness and bad faith of the Italian powers. Above all he was incensed against Venice; and in order to be avenged on this proud republic, he granted to Maximilian all that he asked. The cessions then made or stipulated by Louis are so enormous as to be incredible. The heirs of his daughter Claude by Charles of Luxembourg were to possess not only Milan, but the duchies of Burgundy and Britany, which thus dismember the monarchy of France, and reduce it almost by one half. De Seyssel, the minister and biographer of Louis, excuses his conduct on this occasion, by saying that the king merely wanted to gain Maximilian's aid against the Venetians, and that he never intended to fulfil these conditions. I do not credit this would-be exculpation, which sacrifices the king's good faith to his patriotism. It seems much more probable that these stipulations were owing to the influence of Anne of Britany; to the love of that queen for her own daughter, whose exaltation she preferred to that of

France; and at the same time to Anne's hatred of Louisa of Savoy, and of her son Francis, the heir to the throne. Every Frenchman was shocked and terrified at the prospect of these provinces being conveyed to a foreign power. Louis himself, listening to the voice of his counsellors, was struck with remorse at the folly and want of patriotism which characterised such measures. The states-general were called together: they drew up a strong remonstrance against them, and supplicated that the princess Claude should be given in marriage to Francis. The king consented to this. But so long as Anne of Britany lived, she never allowed the marriage to take place.

Maximilian was of course extremely wroth on learning that the king of France and the assembly of the nation refused to fulfil the treaty. He resolved to attack the French in Italy. Genoa about this time had rebelled against Louis. The Genoese had for very many years been oscillating between freedom and a state of dependance on France. Equally intolerant of either condition, they changed from one to the other, and knew no repose. Louis, however, conquered and reduced them to submission. Maximilian was too late to support their insurrection. The Venetians, then allies of the king, barred the passage of the Austrians into Italy. They defeated Maximilian, and compelled him to purchase a treaty, resigning his conquests. They concluded it without awaiting the consent of Louis, or allowing him to derive from it any advantage.

This was a new grievance added to the many already entertained against these republicans by the French. Maximilian was of course ready to join against them. Pope Julius was at variance with them on account of Faenza, and other towns, the wreck of the Borgian usurpations, which they held. Between these powers and Ferdinand of Spain was formed the famous league of Cambray for the destruction of Venice. It was called famous from having nearly attained its aim,—a distinction which could be applied to few treaties of the time.

In raising his army for this enterprise the king made an important improvement in his levies. He began to mistrust the Swiss, whose mercenary and turbulent spirit was scarcely recompensed by their character for courage. Therefore, although he hired a corps of them to the number of 6000, he at the same time endeavoured to resuscitate the French infantry. Louis XI. had abandoned the good custom of training the French peasants to arms, which had so contributed to the victories of Charles VII. The despot dreaded a national army. The armies of Charles VIII., and hitherto those of Louis XII., were composed of mounted gentlemen, who formed the cavalry, and of hired Swiss, or perhaps a few Gascons, for infantry. This was the principal reason of the first success and subsequent defeats of the French in Naples. Cavalry force, so superior when in good condition, is liable to be unhorsed, and is more easily disorganised than infantry. Louis now levied a body of infantry in France of from 12,000 to 14,000 men. To give spirit and respectability to this force, he induced his bravest captains, Bayard, Molard, and Chabannes, to fight on foot and command these new brigades; and it required all his influence to make them submit to such degradation. The French cavalry amounted to 12,000 men. With this army he marched against the Venetians. Their army, no wise inferior, was commanded by the count de Petilliana, whose policy accorded with the orders of the senate to avoid a battle. Alviana, the Venetian general second in command, risked an attack in despite of this at Agnadel. An action took place, in which the count feebly supported his lieutenant. Louis, who fought in the thickest of the engagement, was victorious. The Venetian army was utterly routed; and the French king, advancing to the brink of the Lagunes, enjoyed the satisfaction of sending from his cannon some vain shots against the discomfited but still unsubdued queen of the Adriatic.

This success dissolved the league. The fickle Maximilian found some other phantom to pursue. He wished

to become pope. Julius II., having obtained possession of the towns which he coveted from the Venetians, leagued with them against Louis; and a war, or a succession of skirmishes, ensued between the French and him, which is amusing by the scruples of the French generals, who feared to make the most of their advantages. "It is singular how much more free from idle superstition the middling orders were than the higher. The king, the queen, and even the gallant knights Bayard and de Chaumont, shrunk from warring against the sovereign pontiff. The states-general, the commons of France, on the contrary, urged the war, and declared that Julius, who himself wielded the sword, might be made to suffer from it. Louis, in consequence, sent a powerful army against the pope, under the command of Gaston de Foix duke of Nemours, his sister's son, then twenty-two years of age. Gaston showed himself worthy to command. His army, upwards of 20,000 strong, counted in its ranks 5000 lansquenets in Maximilian's service. That prince wrote to them to retire. Gaston intercepted and destroyed the letter, and without loss of time laid siege to Ravenna, in order to induce the enemy to risk an engagement for its relief. His artifice succeeded. The troops of the pope, the Venetians, and the king of Spain, marched towards Ravenna, and Gaston faced about to meet them. The battle of Ravenna ensued; the most serious that had been fought for many years. The two armies confronted each other on the 11th of May. The Spaniards being entrenched, Gaston hesitated to attack, and the action began with firing and cannonade. When it had lasted some hours, Fabricio Colonna, who commanded the papal troops, weary of seeing them mowed down without striking a blow, rushed over the entrenchment to charge the French: Bayard, Gaston, and his companions, withstood the attack, and after half an hour's combat the Italians were put to the rout. The Spaniards, however, under Peter of Navarre, held their ground. They consisted chiefly of infantry, being but 400 horse

to 4000 foot. Ferdinand, in his Moorish wars, had imitated Charles VII.'s wise policy in arming the peasants and creating a national infantry. In the present action the Spaniards had suffered little; being entrenched, they had lain down during the cannonade, and had, with ease, repulsed the lansquenets. Even now, when deserted by their allies, they retreated step by step, showing a bold front to their enemies. Gaston de Foix, elated with his victory, was enraged to see the Spaniards escape unbroken. Gathering in haste a few cavaliers, the young general himself charged furiously upon the retreating phalanx to break it. The hero met his death, being pierced with fourteen pike-wounds. Yves d'Alegre, another celebrated French captain, perished with him; and Lautrec, afterwards so famous, lay pierced with a number of wounds. The French, nevertheless, were victorious. The two generals, Peter of Navarre and Fabricio Colonna, were prisoners; and we also mark in the list the marquis of Pescara and the cardinal de' Medici, soon after Leo X.

The sack of Ravenna was almost the only fruit reaped by this signal victory. Julius II., undaunted by defeat, refused to yield. He raised up the English and the Swiss against Louis, who was threatened with invasion from both these countries. Maximilian let loose upon Milan his namesake Maximilian Sforza, son of Ludovico; and the Swiss espoused the youth's pretensions. The cantons were enraged against Louis for attempting to substitute French soldiers for them. When he sent La Tremouille to negotiate with them, they demanded that 15,000 Swiss should be yearly hired, and paid by France in peace and war. They demanded also the Milanese for Sforza, and the abolition of the pragmatic sanction for the pope. It is said, they also resented some injurious words spoken by Louis. Whatever was its cause, their resentment was but too well seconded by their force. The French under La Palisse and Trivulzio were driven out of the Milanese, and even Genoa again declared itself independent. The feats of

Bayard during this unfortunate campaign might be made to fill pages, but they availed nothing. Navarre was at the same time wrested by Ferdinand from Jean d'Albret. Although the king of France still bears the title, the province has ever since remained to the Spaniards.

The death of Julius II. occurred about this time, to give some respite to Louis. His successor, Leo X., was not unfriendly to France. The enmity between Louis and Ferdinand burned less fierce, and a truce was agreed on. The king's darling object was the Milanese, which he had twice lost; his efforts were now exerted to recover it for the third time. An army marched thither under La Tremouille and Trivulzio; and the Milanese, as usual, submitted to the superior force. Sforza shut himself up with 6000 Swiss in Novara, and was soon besieged there. Those mountaineers were actuated by implacable hatred against the French: they sallied forth before daybreak from Novara, to surprise the invaders in their camp; it was defended by a formidable park of artillery, which did great execution in their dense ranks, until, with undaunted perseverance, they carried the entrenchments and turned the guns on the French. The cavalry escaped; but all the infantry, the body most odious to the Swiss, perished. The veteran La Tremouille lost a leg. Thus once more did the fabric of French conquests in Italy fall in ruins to the ground. Louis had no longer spirits to return to the charge; nor, if he had, would his enemies have allowed him leisure. Henry VIII. of England had invaded France in concert with Maximilian. He laid siege to Terouenne. The French succeeded in throwing supplies into the town; but being attacked suddenly some days after by the English and imperialists, they were seized with a panic and fled. This has been called the battle of Spurs. Bayard, who refused to join in the flight of his compatriots, was made prisoner after a gallant defence. Terouenne was the sole conquest of Henry. The Swiss at the same time had burst into Burgundy:

La Tremouille had no forces to oppose them, and he was soon besieged in Dijon. He offered to treat; and they demanded the most exorbitant conditions. In the present distressed state of the monarchy, La Tremouille thought deceit warrantable: he promised the Swiss all their demands, aware that the king would afterwards disavow them; and at the same time offered a large sum, at which the Swiss greedily caught, and decamped to their mountains. Never did a more fearful storm menace France; happily, however, it blew over. Fortunately too for Europe, at that time when ambition reigned uncontrolled by any maxim of either justice or prudence, the means of warlike defence were so much superior to those of offence, that conquests were never permanent, unless where they were salutary and natural extensions of territory or empire.

In January, 1514, Louis lost his queen, Anne of Britany, to whom he was tenderly attached. She was a woman of distinguished beauty, though she limped in her gait. She possessed great influence over Louis; was proud, independent, and obstinate,—qualities characteristic of the Bretons. Anne was at the same time a pious, chaste, and exemplary queen. It was through her influence and importance that the female sex, hitherto excluded, were introduced into society: she formed a court, and collected around her the principal young ladies of rank in the kingdom, whose manners and principles she loved to form. Unfortunately, the successor of Louis saw in this collection of beauty but a prey for his licentiousness; and Francis thus speedily corrupted an institution intended by its virtuous patroness to purify as well as adorn society. The establishment of a court, that is, of a court in which woman's presence was allowed and her influence felt, was, trifling as it may seem, the most important innovation of the age.

Louis, attached as he had been to Anne, did not long delay to fill up the place by her left vacant. Policy joined with other reasons to prompt this step. As the

seal of a reconciliation and alliance with Henry VIII., Louis espoused that monarch's sister Mary, a princess then in the flower of her age. The gay habits of a bridegroom did not suit the constitution of the king, then turned of fifty-four. In a few weeks after his marriage he was seized with a fever and dysentery, which carried him off at the palace of the Tournelles, in Paris, on the first day of the year 1515.

Never was monarch more lamented by the great mass of his subjects than Louis XII. He was endeared to them principally by his economy and forbearance in levying contributions, and by his strict administration of justice, so different from the sanguinary executions which characterised the reign of Louis XI., when no man could be certain of life. He reduced the taxes more than one third in the early part of his reign, and even in his distresses preferred selling the crown lands to any of the usual expedients for exaction.* Hence Louis earned the appellation of *Father of his people.* His popularity was much greater with the middling than with the higher classes. The latter called his economy parsimony, and his sympathy with the commons forgetfulness of his rank. Writers of the reigns of Louis XIV. and XV. seek to depreciate the character of Louis XII. and to elevate that of his successor. Louis XII. they consider as the *roi roturier,* the plebeian king; Francis as the aristocratic and chevaleresque. The nobility certainly do not appear prominent in this reign. New names arise and become illustrious as in the time of Charles VII. The lesser noblesse or gentry were in fact treading on the heels and taking the places of the higher aristocracy. The latter rallied or were re-created

* The imposts on the accession of Francis I. were as follows:—
1. The *taille,* amounting to 1,075,000 livres.
2. The *gabelle,* being one fifth of the value of salt superadded to it.
3. The *aides,* a tax (of Spanish origin) on the sale of wine, wood, fish and meat. This was a sou per livre, or one twentieth on the gross sale, and one third in addition on the retail.

Francis increased the *gabelle* by one half; the *taille* was also augmented. "His levying of the *aides,*" says Rœderer, "destroyed the vineyards of France for two centuries, and was one of the causes of the revolution of 1798." We should add to this the sale of offices by Francis, a lucrative source of revenue to him.

in the days of Francis, but these tendencies were as much the effect of opposite states and circumstances, as of the opposite characters of the two monarchs.

The writers of the Revolution reverse the system of favouritism: they choose Louis, the father of his people, to be their hero, and they depreciate the kingly Francis. A living author of this school, Rœderer, has seen every perfection in Louis XII., and he considers that the commons of France were in possession of perfect constitutional freedom during his reign: history, however, does not present this view of the question. Although Louis did certainly seem to allow in the parliament a power of examining and objecting to his edicts, yet the assembly of states in his reign was far from assuming or being allowed aught like a constitutional control. The very virtues and moderation of Louis were inimical to political freedom, since, by rendering the commons contented, they took from them, with the wish, the right of remonstrance. Had a prodigal and an unpopular king been reduced to the same distress as Louis was in the latter years of his reign, the commons of France might opportunely have made a stand for their privileges, and at least kept alive their traditions of freedom; but nothing that took place during this reign can induce us to retract the opinion, that in the period of Charles the Wise and of John, French constitutional freedom had reached its zenith, from whence it declined and sank; till every ray was lost in the night of despotism.

CHAP. VI.

1515—1547.

FRANCIS THE FIRST.

We have hitherto traversed the early centuries of French history with a hurried step, our pages necessarily from their brevity affording more information than interest. Yet, as the remote ages of a foreign country must occupy but a limited space in our memory, we have perhaps not been too brief for Englishmen. To follow closely the progress of those political institutions, fortunately not our own, which were doomed to perish and merge in mere despotism, would have been an ungrateful and a needless task; while to give a lively picture of chivalrous personages and times would have required the space and leisure, with the simplicity and detail, of the ancient chroniclers. The idlest student too may give an hour to Froissart, whilst few there are who can devote time and thought to the study of Guicciardini and De Thou.

For this reason greater space has been assigned to the period we now enter upon. It may be called the frontier line of modern history: it is the horizon which bounds our historical view; all within it stretching in continuance up to the very present, separated only by three centuries, — an interval which, however great it may seem to us, is in reality no very extended portion of time. To this epoch may be traced the different political systems and fortunes of the European states. They had then, each of them, attained their national limits. Nations, like men, when they arrive at maturity of growth, seek to exert their force externally. To encroach upon, to conquer, to reduce their neighbours, is the natural impulse of the many as of the few. Laws and civilisation have restrained the frowardness of man: it is to be hoped that a still greater degree of enlightenment may yet equally tame the envious and

ambitious spirit of nations; and that man in the aggregate may at length be taught the moral wisdom and forbearance which have been forced upon the individual.

At that time aggrandisement was the only aim that policy could propose to itself. Unfortunately the same maxim, however refuted, is far from being exploded; although the great lesson of modern history is the hopelessness of pushing conquests beyond geographical limits. What quantities of blood were spilt in vain attempts of English kings to seize part of France; in the efforts of French princes to hold portions of Italy! If it was the mad policy of one nation to conquer, it became that of the other to defend, and of the third to interfere in favour of the weakest. Hence the great principle of the balance of power, first acted upon by the Italian states, and from them extending, in this period, until it became the policy of Europe. It began to be understood and to prevail at the very time when monarchs, growing universally despotic, and wielding the mature powers and resources of their kingdoms, felt themselves naturally inclined and urged to conquest. This great principle neutralised their efforts; and by rendering universal dominion impracticable, completed the final demarcation between ancient and modern times.

Francis I. ascended the throne at the age of twenty-one: he was tall, handsome, robust. Reared in retirement at Amboise under the care of his mother, Louisa of Savoy, a gallant dame, he received the education of a knight rather than that of a monarch. While young Charles, his future rival, was made to study history and political science under an active statesman, Francis was merely taught the accomplishments of chivalry, garnished with such lighter studies as romance and rhyming story, and the feats of classic heroes told in modern fashion. He thus ascended the throne with no more solid principles than a love of pleasure and of glory. Francis was, however, of a kind and friendly nature. For his mother he ever entertained the most obsequious regard; and his piety in this respect was

unfortunate: it was her influence that displayed itself in the first appointments of the new reign. Duprat was made chancellor; and the duke of Bourbon, a young man of handsome person but austere manners, was nominated constable. An agreeable exterior was equally the passport to the favour of Francis and to that of his mother. Bonnivet, the future favourite and admiral was the handsomest man of his time. The family of Foix were equally distinguished for personal attractions: the three brothers, one of whom was Lautrec, were advanced to the command of armies, and their sister became the mistress of the young monarch.

It is singular, that almost the first political act of both Francis and of Charles, then but count of Flanders, was to enter into a mutual treaty: Charles promised to restore Navarre when he should succeed to the throne of Spain; which succession Francis, on the other hand, guaranteed to him. Charles was so gratified by the conduct of his ambassador, Henry of Nassau, upon this account, that he asked and obtained for him from Francis the hand of Claude de Châlon, sister of Philibert prince of Orange. It was this marriage that transported the title and estates of Orange to the house of Nassau.

The first thought that naturally occurred to a young monarch like Francis was to reconquer the Milanese, and avenge the defeat of his predecessor. Alliances were the first consideration, and the French ministers used every art to lessen the number of their enemies. The projects of invading Italy were kept a profound secret, and the fears of the Italian princes were allayed by the peaceable declarations of the French envoys. The learned Budæus was the ambassador sent by Francis to pope Leo on this occasion. The Swiss, enraged at the nonperformance of the stipulations accepted at Dijon by La Tremouille, threatened France with an invasion. Francis grasped at the pretext to raise and assemble an army in Burgundy. This alarmed Ferdinand of Spain, as well as Maximilian of Austria, and his namesake Sforza, then in possession of Milan. The revolt of

Genoa to the French at the same time betrayed their views upon Italy. And the Swiss accordingly, instead of invading Burgundy, poured down into Piedmont, and occupied all the known passes of the Alps.

In raising funds for the equipment of his army, Francis already displayed his reckless and imperious character. He shrunk from assembling the states, which had usually been the first act of a new reign: at the same time he feared to commence by the unpopular measure of augmenting the *taille*. As an expedient, Duprat proposed to render the offices of the judicature venal. A new chamber of twenty counsellors was created, and the seats were put up to auction. There had been previous instances of principal offices being purchased, but Francis was the first king that appointed judges in parliament for money. Strange it is, that a corruption so gross and so revolting had an effect rather beneficial. It increased the independence of French judges, and gave them politically much greater weight than they had before possessed; while sentiments of honour, traditionally cherished and observed by the great families of the *robe*, enforced of course with a due reverence for public opinion, proved sufficient to keep the source of justice pure—even purer, perhaps, than in countries where the nomination depended on the royal will.

The army now assembled by Francis at Lyons was estimated at 60,000 men, the most formidable in number that France had yet equipped. There were 2500 gentlemen cavaliers, each attended by his suite of four or five horsemen. These were the *Gensdarmerie*. The lansquenets, or hired German infantry, amounted to 22,000. Six thousand Gascon infantry, as many more French promiscuously levied, and 3000 pioneers, completed the army. The rear-guard advanced under the constable Bourbon to clear the passage of the Alps, and to force the Swiss from the post of Susa, which blocked up the only two known roads across the mountains. To find or make another path became necessary, in order

to turn the impregnable position; and fortunately a guide undertook to lead the French over the Cottian Alps into the marquisate of Saluces. Even for the army to pass was a work of difficulty, but their artillery was what the French captains chiefly relied on to discomfit the Swiss. To drag cannons over deep valleys and precipitous steeps was more than Hannibal had achieved, and was afterwards one of the principal boasts of the army that conquered at Marengo. The soldiers of France accomplished the task, however, and penetrated into Italy by the sources of the Po. The Italians did not suspect the possibility of so hardy an enterprise. Prospero Colonna was traversing Piedmont at the head of the papal cavalry to join the Swiss, and was reposing at Villefranche, when the town was surprised, and Colonna himself, and his troops, taken prisoners by La Palice and d'Aubigny. The news of this surprise soon reached the Swiss, and they abandoned in a panic their now useless position, retreating to Milan, and pillaging the towns they were obliged to evacuate. Their disappointment produced quarrels between the chiefs. The cardinal of Sion reproached one of the captains of Berne with partiality to the French. The captain and his soldiers, by way of retort, demanded their pay; and the cardinal, the sworn enemy of France, was obliged to fly from their clamours.

This opened the way for negotiation. The king, with the rest of his army, had in the mean time crossed the Alps, and lay encamped at Marignano. The prowess of the Swiss was dreaded, and the terrific day of Novara was held in remembrance. Consequently, when they demanded a large sum of money for themselves, and a pension for Maximilian Sforza, in return for evacuating the Milanese, the terms were granted. Francis raised the money instantly by borrowing of his officers; and envoys were already despatched with the stipulated sum, when tidings were brought to the constable, that the Swiss, in lieu of concluding a treaty, were meditating an attack. The cardinal of Sion had,

in fact, hurried back to Milan on the first news of the accommodation. He called his countrymen round him, harangued them, and rekindled that hatred to the French for which history assigns no sufficient cause.

The Swiss determined to surprise the French, to carry the artillery in the first attack, and turn it on their enemies, an operation so successful at Novara. Bourbon, however, was prepared for them. The artillery, consisting of seventy pieces, were placed behind an entrenchment, commanding the road; the lansquenets were stationed to guard it, while the cavalry, drawn up behind, and on each side, waited to observe the order of the Swiss. They came on in silence, without drum or trumpet; a cloud of dust, raised by their speed, announcing, nevertheless, their approach. It was the middle of September, several hours after noon. The Swiss came in one compact column, rushing on the artillery, and against the lansquenets, those rivals in their mercenary profession of war, whom they hated, and whom they swore that day to exterminate. At first the lansquenets recoiled from the furious charge of the Swiss: some of the cannon were already captured; when the cavalry and the black bands, the king himself amongst them, extended in the form of wings, and took the phalanx of the Swiss on either side in flank. The lansquenets, thus supported, took courage. The first charge of the Swiss, so universally victorious, was here not decidedly successful, and having no longer the advantage of an impulse, their pikes became less formidable. Obliged to face enemies that almost surrounded them, their phalanx was split into numerous bodies, which continued the combat, not only till sunset, but even till the moonlight failed them. Some of these bodies succumbed, however: one yielded to a charge led by the king himself; the Swiss throwing down their halberds, and crying "France!" in token of submission. Towards midnight, utter darkness stopped the combat, and both parties, intermingled, slept or kept watch in little bands amongst their ene-

mies. The king himself reposed on the stock of a cannon.

When day broke, both armies rallied;—the Swiss to form their original phalanx; the French round their cannon, which were again plied with true aim and fearful alacrity. The Swiss renewed the attack. The lansquenets still held the entrenchment; the rest of the army assailed the enemy in flank. After some hours' fighting, the Swiss began to despair. They now condescended to manœuvre, and despatched a considerable body to turn and attack the French camp in rear: but it was too late; the division was beaten back, and naught was left for the Swiss but to retreat. This they did in good order and undaunted; though pursued not only by the victorious French, but by the Venetians, who arrived at the close of the action. The count de Petigliana, the Venetian general, desirous to share in the combat, charged the retreating Swiss, and perished.

Thus did the young monarch signalise the very commencement of his reign by a splendid victory gained over the most renowned soldiers in Europe, and those whom the French had most to fear. The veteran Trivulzio, who had seen seventeen pitched battles, called all of them "child's play," in comparison with that of Marignano, which he designated as the "battle of giants." Yet it is more remarkable for the glory won, than for the blood spilled in it. Trivulzio, the king, the constable Bourbon, the duke of Lorraine, and Bayard, were all wounded or unhorsed, or in imminent peril. He who most distinguished himself was Claude count de Guise, brother of the duke of Lorraine: he commanded the black bands, and had fallen, pierced by innumerable wounds; from which he nevertheless recovered, and lived to found an illustrious name. The principal of the slain were, a prince of the house of Lorraine, one of the house of Bourbon, and the prince of Talmont, elder son of La Tremouille. One of the first acts of the king, after the action, was to receive knighthood from the hand of Bayard, "the chevalier without fear

and without reproach." Sensible of the honour done to him by the choice, Bayard vowed that the sword which had knighted so valiant a monarch should never be wielded except against the infidels. "When he had uttered this vow," quoth his secretary, who was his historian, "he took two leaps, and returned the sword to its scabbard."

The duchy of Milan was conquered by the victory of Marignano. The Swiss, who held the fortress of the capital, surrendered it, being hard pressed by the armies of Peter of Navarre, which were now in the service of the French king. Maximilian Sforza abandoned his rights in return for a pension of 30,000 crowns, which he was to enjoy in France, "no wise discontented," he said, "to be delivered from the tyranny of the Swiss, the caprices of the emperor, and the bad faith of the Spaniards." It now behoved pope Leo to make submission. He had long temporised, and ill concealed his adherence to that patriotic policy which was averse to the establishment of any ultramontane power in Italy. The pope sought an interview with the young monarch, hoping to repair by address the weakness of his position; nor did he fail. The king and the pontiff met at Bologna. Francis was inexorable as to the fortresses and territorial possessions: the pope was obliged to give up Parma and Placentia, of which Julius II. had taken possession after the battle of Ravenna. On other points Francis was not averse to the wishes of Leo: he agreed to protect the influence of the Medicis in Florence; the sovereignty of a family being far more agreeable to the king's ideas than democratic freedom. But it was chiefly in procuring the repeal of the pragmatic sanction, that bulwark of the rights of the Gallican church, that Leo showed his sagacity. This law, which secured the appointment of French prelates by free election, was superseded by an agreement, called the Concordat, which conveyed the right of nominating prelates to the king, who in return conceded the annates, or first year's revenue, to the pope. Both sovereigns gained

by this transaction, at the expense of the nation · the pope, a revenue of which he stood much in need; the king, the means of gratifying and providing for the younger members of the nobility.

Here we may pause to remark that the old aristocracy had almost disappeared; not only the sovereign or ducal families, but the great territorial noblesse. And this was owing, in a great measure, to the necessity of either dividing the family possessions amongst many brothers, the younger having no professional resource but the honourable rather than lucrative profession of arms; or else to the provident care, arising from the same motives, of not rearing a numerous family of noble rank. The court and favouritism of Francis created a new noblesse, which fortunately his wars distinguished; whilst his policy, reserving to them the benefices and prelacies of the church, hitherto open to the democracy, gave encouragement to the production and perpetuation of noble families, which soon caused a great and pernicious excess. The policy of Francis, however, in abrogating the pragmatic sanction, was not so far-sighted. The popes had been long hostile to France on this account: they were of the first influence, not only in Italy, but with the Swiss. To win over the pope to his side, and secure so potent an ally in support of his designs upon Italy, was the chief aim of the king. The parliament, however, made an obstinate resistance: they refused to register the concordat. The king sent the Bastard of Savoy, his uncle, to expostulate and menace. They would not consult in his presence: they sent a deputation to Francis, who was then at Nampont. He made them an angry reply,—"I am king, as well as my predecessors," said he, "and will be obeyed, as they were. You are incessantly vaunting to me Louis XII., and his love of justice; know that I love justice as much as he. That monarch, so exemplarily just, drove those who rebelled against him out of the kingdom, though they were members of the parliament: oblige me not to do the same." The king insisted that they should de-

liberate in the presence of the Bastard of Savoy. They obeyed: but it was to come to the conclusion, that they would not register the concordat; and they appealed to a national council. The university seconded the wish, and joined in the resistance of the parliament. This new resolve of the judicature was made known to the monarch in February, 1518; and his fury was greater than before. "My parliament would erect itself into a senate of Venice," said he; "let it confine itself to the administration of justice, which is worse than ever. I must drag the parliament in my suite, as I do the great council, and watch over its conduct." After prolonging the contest some time, the members were at length induced to yield to the menaces of the king. The obnoxious concordat was registered in the presence of La Tremouille; but they at the same time entered into a secret engagement to adhere in their decisions to the pragmatic sanction, and not to the concordat. This secret engagement they kept. When an ecclesiastical vacancy occurred, the king nominated on one side, the chapter elected on the other; and the parliament, to whom the dispute was referred, never failed to decide in favour of the latter. The king was at length wearied by this obstinacy, and ended by depriving the parliament of all jurisdiction over ecclesiastical appointments, ordering that all disputes on these matters should be referred to his council.

Francis was here made to feel how much his sale of judicial offices had made the judicature independent. The disinclination to meet the states-general, had thus raised up in their place another body of functionaries, who felt themselves entitled and emboldened to offer at the least a shadow of a national opposition. It was indeed but a shadow. The famed legal resistance which the parliament henceforward claimed the right of making, proved rather a cause of irritation and delay, than an effectual bar to the pernicious exertions of the royal will. Nevertheless it shows the effort, the tendency of a great and civilised nation to establish some kind of

check to the absolute authority of the prince. Throughout all empires, however despotic, we find human nature making that effort, entering that protest against utter servitude. And thus we may infer, that political freedom and its guaranty form a want, a necessity, and a law of his kind, towards which, as towards society or self-preservation, man always, however unsuccessfully, aims.

The thoughts of the French monarch were wholly bent upon external policy. He had conquered Milan, won over the pope, and reconciled the Swiss to his interest by the promise of a large pension. He cared not what sacrifices were made at home for the accomplishment of such desirable objects. The enmity of Ferdinand of Spain, and of Maximilian king of the Romans, still remained. The latter undertook a campaign, in 1516, against the Venetians and French; but, as usual, his attempt ended in discomfiture. Ferdinand of Spain died about the same time. The first act of his grandson Charles was to form a new treaty with Francis: it was agreed on at Noyon. By it Claude, the infant daughter of the French king, was betrothed to Charles, and the French claims on Naples were to be given up as her dowry. There was a vague promise that Spain should restore Navarre. But the principal point to Francis was a sum of money and a pension to be paid him by Charles. It is evident, on looking at the treaty, that Francis gave all his advantages, his own claim to Naples, those of his relative to Navarre, and all, apparently, for a beggarly sum of money and an annual stipend. Could he have confided his wants to an assembly of the nation, he would not have needed thus basely to barter his own and the nation's dearly won glory. Peace was, however, purchased by it, and Europe enjoyed a short interval of repose.

The death of Maximilian king of the Romans took place in January, 1519. It left the throne of the empire vacant; and thus a new apple of discord was flung between the two great monarchs of Europe. Charles

aspired to the imperial crown as heir of the house of Austria; Francis as a powerful and independent monarch.

Both candidates employed all the means capable of influencing the electors, omitting neither bribes, promises, nor intimidation. The question was decided by a person superior to the influence of such motives: this was Frederic duke of Saxony, the patron of Luther. To him, for his virtues, his brother electors decreed the imperial crown: but he magnanimously refused, gave his voice to Charles, and brought his colleagues over to this decision. Charles V. was declared emperor in 1520. Francis had declared that he would woo the ambitious prize, as a mistress, with chivalrous and generous feelings towards his rival. Nevertheless he deeply felt the disappointment, and by no means forgave the young emperor his success. Hitherto the French monarch had entertained feelings of friendship for Charles; now he transferred them to Henry VIII., a monarch more congenial to his temper. A meeting took place between them, at the request of Francis, some leagues from Calais, at a spot called ever after the "Field of the Cloth of Gold," from the magnificence displayed by the two courts at this interview. The time passed in festivities, and tournaments. Although mutual acts of courtesy and tokens of confidence passed between the princes, still the object of Francis was not gained. Henry, though passionate and headlong, had still the suspicious and selfish temper of his father and of the Tudors: he was little given to friendship, and was moreover infected with that insular prejudice which represents the French as the natural enemies of the English. Above all, he was jealous of the military fame of Francis, and never espoused his interest till the battle of Pavia humbled the gallant monarch, and erected the emperor into a fitter object of envy. In short, to the vanity of her king was chiefly owing England's observance at that time of the great principle of the balance of power. Henry met the emperor both before and after his interview with Francis; and his leaning, as well as

that of his minister Wolsey, was evidently towards Charles.

Squabbles and skirmishes were the prelude to a general war. An insurrection breaking out in Spain, was considered as affording a favourable opportunity for recovering Navarre. Lesparre, one of the brothers of the house of Foix, marched into the province and conquered it; but, elate with success, he imprudently entered Castile and besieged Logroño. This roused the pride of the Spaniards. An army marched against Lesparre. A battle ensued, in which, despite the French superiority in cavalry and artillery, the Spanish infantry routed that opposed to them, and won the victory. Navarre was again lost. This expedition was not considered as a formal infraction of peace, the French having reserved to themselves, by treaty, the right of succouring Navarre.

A difference at the same time arose between the emperor and the family of De la Mark, dukes of Bouillon. Their estates were on both frontiers, and Francis supported De la Mark. The latter insolently defied the emperor in full diet, and afforded him ample pretext to arm and to march. Italy, however, was the true centre of intrigue, the chief scene of political as well as of warlike events. The ambitious spirit of the popes, each eager to distinguish his reign by some signal acquisition, would not allow that country to remain at peace. Leo X. first leagued with Francis to conquer Naples, and 6000 Swiss were enlisted under pontifical banners, the king furnishing half their pay. Francis, however, either cooled in the project, or had reason to suspect the pope's intentions. He stopped the pay of these Swiss. Recriminations and angry despatches passed between them; and Leo, piqued, flung himself into the alliance of Charles. It was agreed between them to reconquer the Milanese for Francis Sforza; to restore Parma and Placentia to the Holy See; in short, to banish French power and influence from Italy.

The government of the conquered province had been such as to render the French yoke odious to the Milanese.

The cause lay in the intrigues and corruption of the court. As soon as the government has grown despotic, we are instantly compelled to look for the causes of events in the scandalous chronicle of harlotry. It has been related that Anne, queen of Louis XII., had assembled around her the daughters of the French nobility; and a court was thus gradually formed, no longer composed solely of warriors and statesmen, but of the gay and idle also of both sexes. This sudden freedom had an ill effect upon public morals. The principles and habits of courtiers were not prepared for the increased temptation. The grossness of the age did not yet admit of that true and pure enjoyment of female society which modern cultivation allows. Francis, when he was suddenly released from Amboise, and found himself possessed of all power, and endowed with all attraction, in the midst of an assemblage of beauty, gave a loose rein to his passions. His wife Claude, daughter of the late king, never had the command of his affections; and the court of Francis soon arrived at that state of dissoluteness which we find recorded in the pages of Brantôme, and from which we shrink in incredulity and disgust.

Françoise de Foix was one of those high-born maidens whom Anne of Britany had reared near her person. That queen had given her in marriage to the count de Chateaubriand, who retained her at his remote château, far from the fascinations of a court. Francis, however, insisted on the presence of the beauty. The countess de Chateaubriand was summoned to the capital, and soon became the avowed and chosen mistress of her sovereign. Her brother Lautrec was made governor of Milan, the constable Bourbon being recalled to give place to him, and the veteran Trivulzio being passed over. Thus were two powerful men slighted, in order to make room for the brother of the countess of Chateaubriand. Lautrec was a gallant soldier, but he was tyrannical and insolent: he became jealous of Trivulzio, who in his private station still preserved the dignity and influence attached to his years, his services, and his rank. Lautrec rendered the

French king suspicious of Trivulzio. The mistress aided the insinuations of her brother. The veteran marshal instantly repaired to court. Being denied admittance to the royal presence, he placed himself in the way of the king near Montlhery. The monarch averted his regard in silence when he perceived Trivulzio. The latter, stricken by the injustice and ingratitude thus manifested, and weighed down with eighty years of trial, took to his couch and died. He was buried at Châtre, near Montlhery, with this epitaph over his remains —

Hic quiescit qui nunquam quievit.

Lautrec's government throughout was marked with similar injustice. The principal inhabitants of Milan were in exile and in captivity. All sighed for the restoration of the Sforzas. An act of insolence and imprudence on the part of Lautrec's brother afforded the pope a pretext for openly breaking with the French. He suddenly attacked Reggio, the chief retreat of the Milanese exiles, hoping to surprise it; Guicciardini, the governor, was too vigilant, however, and the injustice of the aggressor was all that was gained by the French.

At this critical period the general war broke out. The imperialists invaded Champagne, but were repulsed from before Mezières by the gallantry of Bayard. The young Montmorency, playmate of the king, here distinguished himself. Bonnivet the favourite, and Guise, warred on the Spanish frontier. Milan was the spot most vulnerable, and most threatened. Still Lautrec was at court, demanding money, and declaring that he would not depart without a supply. He was aware of the enmity of the duchess d'Angoulême, who detested madame de Chateaubriand and the house of Foix: he knew that she was capable of intercepting, from hate to him, the funds that were destined to the defence of the Milanese. Lautrec was but too clear-sighted in this. Still he was persuaded to depart; the most solemn promises both of Francis and his mother guarantying the despatch of the necessary funds. They never came.

The confederates, consisting of Spain and all the Italian powers, Venice alone excepted, commenced by the siege of Parma. They were obliged to raise it. Lautrec was at first successful, and he even lost an opportunity of destroying the enemy. The Swiss served in both armies; and their Diet at this time recalled them from either service, to prevent the mutual slaughter of compatriots. The message reached the Swiss in Lautrec's army; that addressed to the army of the confederates was intercepted by the cardinal of Sion. Lautrec was thus abandoned by his best troops; he was compelled to retreat; and the French were driven out of Milan. Pope Leo, on his part, took Parma and Placentia. He had been often heard to say, that he should die contented, could he gain possession of these towns. When he won them, his joy was so excessive that it brought on a fever, of which he died.

The death of pope Leo gave some respite to the French, and allowed Lautrec to rally. He received reinforcements from France; and induced 10,000 Swiss to rejoin him, on promises of pay from the sum that had not yet arrived. With these forces he pushed on to recover Milan, driving before him the imperialists and Sforza, who took refuge in a château and entrenched park called the Micoque. Lautrec's wish was to turn this position; he knew it to be too strong to carry by assault. The Swiss demanded orders to attack. Lautrec used every means of dissuasion. Their reply was, "Our pay, or the signal for action." The first of these alternatives was not in Lautrec's power, and he was thus forced to abide by the second. The Swiss, in whose front rank Montmorency marched, attacked the entrenchments with their wonted fury. They would not even wait for the filling up of the fosse. A tremendous fire of artillery swept away whole ranks, while the musquetry brought down, one by one, the brave fellows who had descended into the ditch, and were vainly poking the walls with their lances. Their general, de la Pierre, and twenty-two of the Swiss captains, perished.

Montmorency, wounded, was almost smothered under a heap of slain. The rest of the Swiss, indignant against Lautrec for the consequences of their own temerity, instantly abandoned him, and marched off for their mountains. Thus were the French once more driven from Italy.

The rage of Francis against his unsuccessful general was extreme. He refused to see him. The duchess d'Angoulême exasperated the king's animosity by her censures; while madame de Chateaubriand dared not intercede for her brother. At length the constable procured Lautrec admission to the king, who covered him with reproaches. "It is not I who am to blame," said Lautrec; "the gendarmerie have served eighteen months without pay; and the wilfulness of the Swiss, both in fighting against my wish, and then abandoning me, was owing to my inability to pay them."—"And the 400,000 crowns?" said the king: "Were never received," was the answer.—Francis summoned his treasurer, Semblançay, and asked him sternly, how came it that the promised sum had not yet reached Lautrec?—The treasurer replied, that the duchess d'Angoulême had made him pay it to her. The king then rushed to the apartments of his mother:—"It is to your avarice then, madam, that I owe the loss of the Milanese." The duchess could not deny the receipt of the sum, but she alleged having received it on her private account. The excuse did not satisfy the monarch, and Semblançay kept his station. The vengeance of the queen-mother henceforth unremittingly followed the unfortunate treasurer. Heads of accusation can never be wanting against a man entrusted with the finances of a kingdom; and five years after, Semblançay, an honest and irreproachable minister, fell a victim to the intrigues and iniquity of the monarch's mother, and died as a malefactor on the common gibbet.

Whilst Francis met with these reverses, which were the natural consequences of the blunders and recklessness of his administration, the emperor Charles was

carefully securing every friend, and improving every advantage. The new pope, Adrian, was his creature: Wolsey's resentment, on being disappointed of the tiara, was soothed for a time; and Henry VIII. was induced not only to break with France, but to send thither an army under the duke of Suffolk, which, however, achieved nothing remarkable. The Venetian republic, also, the last of the Italian powers that inclined to France, was estranged from his friendship, and joined the alliance against him.

Not content with making every foreign potentate his foe, the French monarch had at the same time the imprudence to alienate the most powerful of his subjects. Trivulzio, we have seen, expired beneath his neglect. Charles, duke of Bourbon, and constable of the kingdom, was now driven by injustice to league with the enemies of his country. The last duke of Bourbon had left a daughter, Suzanne. The title, and a certain portion of the heritage, went by law to the male heir; but as a considerable part would be inherited by Suzanne, the paternal care of Louis XII. arranged a marriage between Charles, the existing duke, and Suzanne de Bourbon, thus preserving unbroken the heritage and title of that illustrious family. The duke was of a handsome person; and on the death of his duchess, Suzanne, without issue, the duchess d'Angoulême made advances to fill her place. This she was the more forward in doing, as, being descended in the female line from a previous duke of Bourbon, she considered herself to have claims on that part of the property which might descend to a female. The constable, however, was blind to her advances, backed by this tacit menace. And the slighted duchess instantly put forward her claim to the Bourbonnais as appertaining by right to her.

Bourbon had previously received affronts from the king, who disliked his cold temper and reserved demeanour. The duke was grave and dignified, fond of war and business, and averse to join in the follies of a court. It appears, too, that Francis amused himself at

the duke's expense; and the latter bore raillery with so little good humour, as to be called the "Prince of small endurance." Whatever was the cause, they certainly disliked each other; and Francis manifested this feeling first by recalling Bourbon from the government of Milan, and afterwards by giving the command of the vanguard in one of the northern campaigns to the duke of Alençon, although that post of honour was the constable's right.

Bearing all this in mind, when his hitherto unquestioned right to the Bourbonnais was called in question, the duke instantly apprehended that a league to destroy him had been planned by the king and his mother. Duprat, the chancellor, was but a creature of the latter; and to hope for justice in the event of trial was absurd. Bourbon was, therefore, driven to look abroad for a refuge or for vengeance. The emperor's emissary was at hand, proffering him that prince's sister in marriage, and many advantages, if he would join the emperor's party, and raise a civil war in France against its monarch. Bourbon hesitated long, but finally acceded to the proposals of Charles. Francis in the mean time had been roused from the lap of pleasure by the league of all Europe against him. He was at Lyons, on his way to Italy at the head of an army, when Bourbon was about to take the fatal step. Francis tried to soothe him: he showed his confidence by appointing him lieutenant-general of the kingdom; and assured him, that whatever might be the result of this unfortunate process, he would not see him despoiled. The object of Francis seems to have been the gratification of his mother, and the driving of Bourbon to a marriage with her. This failed, however, like every act of the monarch's policy. The constable determined to join the emperor. But Francis was now near, accompanied with forces; and as circumstances had awakened his suspicions, he called on the constable to accompany him to Italy. Bourbon feigned sickness, and took to his couch, as a pretext for delay; till at length, seeing that it would be dangerous to trifle

any longer with the impatient Francis, the constable dispersed his suite and fled, followed by a single attendant, into the dominions of the emperor. Francis gained by this desertion, as he confiscated the wide domains of Bourbon. Charles acquired what he least wanted, a general, and an unfortunate claimant.

Bonnivet, the personal enemy of Bourbon, was now entrusted with the command of the French army. He marched without opposition into the Milanese, and might have taken the capital had he pushed on to its gates. Having by irresolution lost it, he retreated to winter quarters behind the Tesino. The operations of the English in Picardy, of the imperialists in Champagne, and of the Spaniards near the Pyrenees, were equally insignificant. The spring of 1524 brought on an action, if the attack of one point can be called such, which proved decisive for the time. Bonnivet advanced rashly beyond the Tesino. The imperialists, commanded by four able generals, Launoi, Pescara, Bourbon, and Sforza, succeeded in almost cutting off his retreat. They at the same time refused Bonnivet's offer to engage. They hoped to weaken him by famine. The Swiss first murmured against the distress occasioned by want of precaution. They deserted across the river; and Bonnivet, thus abandoned, was obliged to make a precipitate and perilous retreat. A bridge was hastily flung across the Sessia, near Romagnano; and Bonnivet, with his best knights and gensdarmerie, undertook to defend the passage of the rest of the army. The imperialists, led on by Bourbon, made a furious attack. Bonnivet was wounded, and he gave his place to Bayard, who, never entrusted with a high command, was always chosen for that of a forlorn hope. The brave Vandenesse was soon killed; and Bayard himself received a gun-shot through the reins. The gallant chevalier, feeling his wound mortal, caused himself to be placed in a sitting posture beneath a tree, his face to the enemy, and his sword fixed in guise of a cross before him. The constable Bourbon, who led the imperialists, soon came up to the

dying Bayard, and expressed his compassion. "Weep not for me," said the chevalier, "but for thyself. I die in performing my duty; thou art betraying thine."

Nothing marks more strongly the great rise, the sudden sacro-sanctity of the royal authority in those days, than the general horror which the treason of Bourbon excited; whilst not very many years previous, the frequent conspiracies of Louis XII., when duke of Orleans, are related as common occurrences, of no extraordinary criminality. The fact is, that this sudden horror of treason was owing, in a great measure, to the revived study of the classics, in which treason to one's country is universally mentioned as an impiety and a crime of the deepest dye. Feudality, with all its oaths, had no such horror of treason. Thus it happened, singularly, that these classic writings, considered, and rightly so, as replete with a spirit hostile to tyranny, nevertheless afforded to the modern world a maxim which has proved one of the strongest supports of kingly power.

Bonnivet had evacuated Italy after this defeat at Romagnano. Bourbon's animosity stimulated him to push his advantage. He urged the emperor to invade France, and recommended the Bourbonnais and his own patrimonial provinces as those most advisable to invade. Bourbon wanted to raise his friends in insurrection against Francis; but Charles descried selfishness in this scheme of Bourbon, and directed Pescara to march with the constable into the south of France and lay siege to Marseilles. Although in this his views were thwarted, still Bourbon promised that the terror of his name should bring the burgesses with the keys at the first cannon-shot. The boast was idle; Marseilles made an obstinate resistance; and Pescara, who envied the exiled prince, did not spare his railleries on the occasion. Whilst mass was performing in the general's tent, a shot from the town swept away the officiating priest and several officers. On hearing the bustle, Bourbon came forth to ask the cause: "Oh!" replied Pescara, "it is the bur-

gesses of Marseilles, who bring us the keys of their town."

Francis, in the mean time, alarmed by the invasion, had assembled an army. He burned to employ it, and avenge the late affront. The king of England, occupied with the Scotch, gave him respite in the north; and he resolved to employ this by marching, late as the season was, into Italy. His generals, who by this time were sick of warring beyond the Alps, opposed the design: but not even the death of his queen, Claude, could stop Francis. He passed Mount Cenis; marched upon Milan, whose population was spiritless and broken by the plague, and took it without resistance. It was then mooted whether Lodi or Pavia should be besieged. The latter, imprudently, as it is said, was preferred. It was at this time that pope Clement VII., of the house of Medici, who had lately succeeded Adrian, made the most zealous efforts to restore peace between the monarchies. He found Charles and his generals arrogant and unwilling to treat. The French, said they, must on no account be allowed a footing in Italy. Clement, impelled by pique towards the emperor, or generosity to Francis, at once abandoned the prudent policy of his predecessors, and formed a league with the French king, to whom, after all, he brought no accession of force. This step proved afterwards fatal to the city of Rome.

The siege of Pavia was formed about the middle of October. Antonio de Leyva, an experienced officer, supported by veteran troops, commanded in the town. The fortifications were strong, and were likely to hold for a considerable time. By the month of January the French had made no progress; and the impatient Francis despatched a considerable portion of his army for the invasion of Naples, hearing that the country was drained of troops. This was a gross blunder, which Pescara observing, forbore to send any force to oppose the expedition. He knew that the fate of Italy would be decided before Pavia. Bourbon, in the mean time, disgusted with the jealousies and tardiness of the imperial

generals, employed the winter in raising an army of lansquenets on his own account. From the duke of Savoy he procured funds; and early in the year 1525 the constable joined Pescara at Lodi with a fresh army of 12,000 mercenaries. They had, besides, some 7000 foot, and not more than 1500 horse. With these they marched to the relief of Pavia.

Francis had a force to oppose to them, not only inferior in numbers, but so harassed with a winter's siege, that all the French generals of experience counselled a retreat. Bonnivet and his young troop of courtiers were for fighting; and the monarch hearkened to them. Pavia, to the north of the river, was covered in great part by the château and walled park of Mirabel. Adjoining this, and on a rising ground, was the French camp, extending to the Tesino. Through the camp, or through the park, lay the only ways by which the imperialists could reach Pavia. The camp was strongly entrenched and defended by artillery, except on the side of the park of Mirabel, with which it communicated, and which was occupied by the duke of Alençon, commanding what was called the rear-guard.

The night of the 23d of February was employed by the imperialists in sapping the park-wall. At daybreak on the 24th a large breach appeared, and the marquis del Guasto rushed in, surprised the duke of Alençon, and carried the château of Mirabel. Brion succeeded in rallying the French, and keeping del Guasto in check, until de Genouillac, the master of the artillery, brought his cannon to bear on the park and its breach. His vigorous and well directed fire discomfited del Guasto, slaughtered the imperialists, and drove them in rout and retreat back through the breach. This was victory enough, could the French king have been contented with it. But the impatient Francis no sooner beheld his enemies in rout, than he was eager to chase them in person, and complete the victory with his good sword. He rushed forth from his entrenchments at the head of his gensdarmerie, flinging himself between the enemy and

his own artillery, which was thus masked and rendered useless. The imperialists rallied as soon as they found themselves safe from the fire of the cannon: the other French chiefs advanced to the succour of their monarch; Alençon supported by the Swiss on the left, Chabannes on the right; and thus it was no longer the attack and defence of an entrenched camp, but a drawn battle upon an open plain.

The famous black bands of Germans in the French service found themselves to the right of the king, between him and the marshal de Chabannes. They were opposed by Bourbon and his lansquenets, who bore toward the brother mercenaries of their country a deadly hate. Bourbon's vengeance led them on, and the black bands were annihilated in the struggle that took place. Their leader, the attainted duke of Suffolk, perished with them, as well as a brother of the duke of Lorraine. Bourbon then turned upon the corps of Chabannes, whom he had separated from the centre; and his lansquenets were here equally successful. Chabannes was made prisoner, and slain in a quarrel between two captains, who disputed the honour of having taken him. The king, in the mean time, fought with undaunted courage. He slew the marquis St. Ange with his own hand, and routed the Italian troops. But he was ill seconded on his left by the Swiss, who unaccountably forgot their ancient valour, and by the duke of Alençon, who fled disgracefully from the field. The Spaniards pressed him, but could not vanquish the French knights resolved to perish around their monarch. At length Bourbon, victorious over the entire right wing, turned the stream of his lansquenets against the centre. They broke the remaining mass of gensdarmerie, and separated them into knots, which still fought desperately, and refused to fly. The battle, confined to this one point, became a confused butchery. Chaumont, Hector de Bourbon, perished: the marechal de Foix, Lautrec's brother, received his death wound, while he was seeking, with his drawn sword, Bonnivet, the enemy of his house,

and the cause of this disaster. Bonnivet himself, unwilling to survive, flung himself on the pikes of the lansquenets. The sight of his dead body gratified the gloomy vengeance of Bourbon. The king, in the mean time, behind a heap of slain, defended himself valiantly; so beaten and shattered, so begrimed with blood and dust, as to be scarcely distinguishable, notwithstanding his conspicuous armour. He had received several wounds, one in the forehead; and his horse, struck with a ball in the head, reared, fell back, and crushed him with his weight: still Francis rose, and laid prostrate several of the enemies that rushed upon him. At this moment he was recognised by Pomperant, the only companion of Bourbon's flight. This gentleman sprang to his aid, fell an instant as if for pardon at the monarch's feet, and then rose to defend him. He at the same time counselled Francis to surrender, telling him that Bourbon was near. The king, enraged at the name, protested he would rather die than surrender to the traitor. Pomperant therefore sent for Lannoi, the viceroy of Naples, to whom Francis yielded his sword.

Such was the signal defeat that put an end to all French conquests and claims in Italy. Francis wrote the following brief letter to his mother:—"All is lost, madam, save honour and life." He was removed to the castle of Pizzighitone, till the emperor's pleasure should be known. Though humbled, the king did not lose his equanimity: he even received Bourbon without giving vent to indignation; Pescara he welcomed with admiration and esteem. The first act of the emperor, on learning the captivity of his rival, was to conceal his joy, to forbid rejoicing, and to affect moderation. Charles's instinct was dissimulation. His next act was to propose the harshest terms to Francis,—the cession not only of Milan and of Naples, but also of Burgundy. Francis, who flattered himself that such a want of generosity proceeded from the crafty counsellors of Charles rather than from himself, longed for an interview with that prince. The desire was eagerly caught up by Lannoi,

who was anxious to remove Francis from Italy, where his guard was uncertain, and where either Sforza, Bourbon, or Pescara, might conspire to liberate him for their own advantage. The headlong Francis gave in to the snare. He himself furnished galleys for the voyage to Spain, and his mandate prohibited the rest of the fleet from attempting to intercept him. Arrived at Madrid, Francis was still kept closely guarded. The interview, for which he had made such efforts, was denied him; and many weeks elapsed, without the emperor's deigning to visit his captive. Such unexpected neglect cut the sanguine Francis to the soul. His spirit sunk under his misfortune and defeat; and a fever, occasioned by despondency, threatened to put an end at once to the life of Francis and the advantages of Charles. The latter at length gave to interest what he refused to generosity. He visited Francis, affected cordiality, and was profuse of the kindest promises. Obvious as were the motives and the insincerity of this friendship, the royal captive trusted to it, and recovered his spirits and his health.

France in the mean time, though stunned and disordered by the first news of the disaster of Pavia, was recovering its composure and force. The duchess of Angoulême was regent; the count de Vendôme, cousin of the constable Bourbon, did not take advantage of his being first prince of the blood, to embroil the kingdom. The parliament, indeed, displeased with the imperious character of the king, and angered on account of the concordat and other causes, gave the regent some trouble. But new allies flocked to France in her distress. The Italian states were all ready to combine against the emperor, whose power they now dreaded. Henry VIII. of England instantly flung his support into the scale of the discomfited Francis, and concluded a treaty with the regent, stipulating that the kingdom should on no account be dismembered. Large numbers of the people of Alsace had taken advantage of the opportunity to rise and invade France, excited by that religious

zeal which scorns restraint. The count of Guise mustered some forces, fell upon them in time, and cut them to pieces. It was for this service that Francis afterwards created the county of Guise into a duchy-peerage,—an honour heretofore granted solely to princes of the blood. The parliament made great opposition to this novelty; but the king was resolute in his friendship, and Guise became one of the high noblesse of France, a duke and peer.

Negotiations for the liberation of the king proceeded, with little prospect of success, at Madrid. Bourbon had betaken himself thither; his presence and his claims were no small source of difficulties. The emperor had promised him his sister Eleanora, queen-dowager of Portugal, in marriage; but as Francis, to disappoint Bourbon, offered to marry this princess himself, the constable was obliged to forego the honour. The marquis Pescara dying at this time, the emperor offered the command of his Italian armies to Bourbon, who was urged to accept of it, and was thus got rid of. Still the terms offered to Francis were so harsh that he could not accede to them. His sister, the duchess of Alençon, had come to tend him in his illness and captivity. She was now about to return; and Francis put into her hand his absolute resignation of the kingdom, that he might be considered as dead, and no farther efforts be made for his liberation. This alarmed the emperor, who became willing to relax in some degree. Still his demands were so exorbitant and unreasonable, that Francis at length consented to extricate himself by a breach of faith, and to swear to a treaty, the stipulations of which he was determined not to perform.

With these opposite views,—grasping severity, that over-reached itself, on the one side, and premeditated bad faith, the almost compulsory resource of Francis, on the other,—the treaty of Madrid was concluded. By it the king agreed to give up Burgundy, to renounce all right to Milan and Naples, as well as to Flanders and Artois. He was to be set at liberty, and to espouse

Eleanora of Portugal, the emperor's sister. He was, moreover, to abandon his allies, the king of Navarre, the dukes of Gueldres, of Wirtemberg, and De la Mark; and he was to re-establish Bourbon in all his property and privileges. Moreover, the two sons of Francis were to remain as hostages for the performance of these conditions, the king himself promising to return into captivity if they were not fulfilled. On the 14th of January, 1526, the treaty was signed; Francis taking the precaution to protest secretly, in presence of his chancellor, against the validity of such exactions. Charles himself could not but mistrust the sincerity of Francis, and he even retained him prisoner a month after the signature. The king's health again declined in consequence; and at length Charles, in a hurried and irresolute way, gave orders for his final liberation. He was led to the river Bidassoa, which separates the countries: his sons, who appeared on the opposite bank, were exchanged for him, and Francis, mounting a horse of extreme swiftness, galloped without drawing rein to St. Jean de Luz, and thence to Bayonne.

Thus freed from captivity, on terms which, if fulfilled, must ruin his kingdom, and if unfulfilled must stain his honour, Francis, it might have been expected, would be instantly occupied in the duty of defending himself and retrieving his affairs. His first act on arriving at Bordeaux, however, was to become enamoured of mademoiselle d'Heilly, better known as the duchess d'Etampes, who superseded the countess of Chateaubriand in his affections, and held thenceforward the greatest influence over the monarch

The liberation of Francis was the signal for a general league against the emperor. The Italian powers were ever disposed to unite against the strongest. Sforza had already rebelled against Charles, and had been driven from Milan by Pescara. All of them,—the pope, the Venetians, the Florentines,—now formed an alliance with the king, on condition that Sforza should remain in possession of Milan. A treaty to this effect was signed at

Cognac, but was kept secret for some time. The states of Burgundy had assembled, to protest against the transfer of their province to the emperor. The king, they said, had no right nor power to make such a stipulation without their consent. When Lannoi, on the part of Charles, demanded the cession of Burgundy, Francis referred him to the answer of the states. The emperor, on learning this evasion of the treaty, called on Francis, as a man of honour, to redeem his word and return into captivity.

This was a trying moment for Francis, who piqued himself on possessing all the chivalric virtues. He could not openly deride the credulity of Charles, as Louis XI. or Ferdinand the Catholic would have done. He was perplexed, distressed, and could only allege the necessity of the case; a plea which by no means satisfied his nice notions of honour. He therefore resolved on taking the advice of his subjects. Despotic as he was, he felt in this case at least the necessity of having the nation to participate his responsibility. To call together the states-general of the kingdom was obviously the natural step in such a case. But no; Francis dreaded the very name of that assembly, in which the vulgar *tiers état*, or people, had a voice. The legists and judges of the parliament had for some time taken upon them to represent the nation, in demurring to taxes and to edicts. Francis, and his minister Duprat, though not wholly contented with the parliament, yet deemed that preferable to an assembly of burgesses. It was resolved therefore between them, that the voice of the nation should now be taken, not in the good old states-general, but in what has since been called an assembly of notables — one of the most unfortunate inventions or innovations that despotic craft could have imagined.

This assembly of notables, or, as some historians will call it, this *bed of justice*, was held in December, 1526. It consisted of prelates, nobles, courtiers, gentlemen, the parliament of Paris, and the presidents of the provincial parliaments; the only admixture of democracy being

the provost of merchants and the four sheriffs of the city of Paris.* Before those Francis made a long discourse; entering at large into the affairs of the kingdom, its finances and resources. He recounted the misfortunes of his captivity, and declared his readiness to return to it, if his people thought that either their interest or his honour so demanded. The reply of each class, for all answered separately, was, that he was absolved from an unjust and compulsory oath, against which he had previously protested, and the fulfilment of which the privileges and welfare of his people alike forbade. They at the same time accorded to him the liberty of raising two millions for the ransom of his sons, assuming in this particular all the rights of the states-general. Thus satisfied, Francis published the general league against the emperor, denominated Holy, because the pope was at its head. Not only the Italian states, but the Swiss and the king of England acceded to it; so that the reverses of Francis, if they had stripped him of territories, rendered him much stronger in alliances than his rival. The emperor, on his side, promised to Bourbon the investiture of the Milanese, if he succeeded in expelling Sforza. This the constable accomplished, subsisting his mercenary troops on the unfortunate inhabitants of Milan—for of money Charles had as notorious a lack as his grandsire Maximilian. Milan taken, pillaged, and wasted, how was Bourbon to support his army—that army by which he lived? for since his exile the prince had inhabited camps, and was averse to any more orderly way of life. He loved his soldiers, rapacious and licentious as they were; and was beloved by them, as a valiant and successful leader inclined to tolerate the license of the freebooter. Since his treason, Bourbon had met every where with insults and ingratitude from the French, the Spaniards, the emperor, and his brother generals. This situation made him misanthropic, and his character degenerated into that of the reckless and ferocious corsair.

* We may judge of the independence of these only representatives of the commons by the fact that Francis caused his learned follower, Budæus, to be elected provost of the merchants of the city of Paris.

To obtain plunder for his army of lansquenets, in lieu of pay, became indispensable; and he accordingly led them south, menacing all the great cities of the peninsula, and uncertain which he should attack. Florence and Rome had both declared against the emperor: Bourbon fixed upon the imperial city as the most glorious prey, and accordingly marched thither his mercenary army. Pope Clement was terrified at his approach, and used all his country's artifices to avert the danger. It approached nevertheless, and Clement shut himself up in the castle of St. Angelo. The army of Bourbon attacked Rome in the morning of the 5th of May, 1527. Bourbon himself applied the first scaling-ladder, and was in the act of mounting it, when the first shot from the walls struck him and put an end to his disastrous career. His army passed over his body to the assault, and Rome was carried by storm. The pillage was general, so merciless were the soldiery. Not all the ravages of Hun and Goth surpassed those of the army of the first prince in Christendom. The cruelty of the German soldiers was unequalled: they indulged in the most horrid extravagance of debauch and impiety. For two months they remained masters of the city; and the pontiff himself was finally obliged to surrender himself a prisoner.

This new triumph of the emperor, over the head of the church too, roused the zeal of Henry VIII. He already meditated a divorce from Catherine, Charles's aunt; and it therefore became his policy to befriend and protect the pope, whose assistance he would chiefly require, against the emperor. Wolsey was therefore despatched to France; the treaty between the crowns was renewed; and a joint army was raised, to march into Italy under the command of Lautrec. That general now compensated for his former ill success. He made himself master of Genoa by the aid of Andrew Doria; and took Pavia by assault, abandoning it to pillage, in revenge for the defeat which the French had suffered under its walls. The conquest of Milan would have

been easy; but as that city was now to belong to Sforza, the French general turned from it towards Rome, in order to procure the liberation of the pope. His approach effected this: the emperor became less harsh in his terms, and Clement soon found himself free at Orvieto.

It was about this time, towards the commencement of 1528, that challenges and defiances passed between Charles and Francis. The former, in his reply to the French envoy, reproached the restored king with an infamous breach of faith; and hinted that he was ready to support his charge as a true knight, sword in hand. Francis, indignant, sent a reply, that the emperor "lied in his throat;" and demanded a rendezvous, or *champ clos*, for the duel; but notwithstanding the choler of both parties, it never took place. It is singular, that in this affair of the single combat the cold and politic Charles seems to have been most in earnest, whilst the obstacles and delays were raised by the headlong and chivalric Francis.

Lautrec in the mean time advanced to the conquest of Naples. He marched to the eastern coast, and soon reduced the provinces bordering on the Adriatic. The command of Bourbon's army had devolved on Philibert, the last prince of Orange of the house of Chalons, another French chief of talents and influence, whom the petulance of Francis had alienated from him and driven into exile. With some difficulty this prince withdrew his army from the spoils of Rome to the defence of Naples. He was not strong enough to face Lautrec in the field: the prince of Orange, therefore, and Moncada the new viceroy, shut themselves up in Naples, where they were soon besieged by Lautrec. Andrew Doria, a faithful partisan of France, held the sea with his Genoese galleys, and blockaded the port. It was proposed to reduce the town by famine. After some time Moncada, fitting out all the galleys in port, made an attack on the Genoese, then commanded by Philippino Doria, Andrew's nephew. The attempt failed:

the Spaniards were beaten, Moncada slain, and most of the captains taken; amongst others, the marquis del Guasto, and two brothers Colonna. Naples thus became in prospect an easy prey to Lautrec. Its fall might have brought the final submission of the kingdom; but the same blunder which Francis persevered in committing throughout his whole reign, lost him this advantage, among so many others.

Such was the fatal habit of the French king to disgust and alienate his best and most attached friends. Doria, for example, like Trivulzio, was an Italian who united with a love of his own country a firm attachment to the French. His exertions had but just torn Genoa from the emperor to give it to Francis: he was now doing the very same by Naples, when it pleased the French court to insult and disoblige him. The prisoners he had won in action were taken from him, and o allowance was made for their ransom. These insult himself Doria might have passed over; — of wr[illegible] offered to his country he was more sensible. The French undertook to fortify Savona, and to raise it into a rival of Genoa. They removed thither the trade in salt, one of the most lucrative sources of the Genoese commerce. Doria expostulated; and another admiral, Barbescenas, was sent to supersede him and bring him prisoner to France. When the admiral arrived, Doria received him, saying, "I know what brings you hither: the French vessels I deliver to you; the Genoese remain under my command. Do the rest of your errand if you dare!" The consequence of this blindness and ingratitude on the part of Francis was soon seen; Genoa declared herself free, and allied herself with the emperor. The blockade of Naples by sea was raised; and the influx of fresh troops and provisions enabled the city to defy its besiegers. These, encamped under a midsummer sun, ill supplied, and harassed, were soon attacked by pestilence. Lautrec their general died of it. The marquis of Saluces, who succeeded him, raised the siege and retired to Aversa, where he soon after surrendered to the prince of

Orange; and thus another unsuccessful Italian expedition was added to the long list of French disasters.

Another army led by the count of St. Pol into the north of Italy met with as little success. Francis felt that he could not re-establish his fortunes: he sickened of the love of glory that had hitherto animated him, and showed himself willing to treat for peace on any terms, provided the cession of Burgundy was not insisted on. Charles by this time saw that the nation would never consent to such a sacrifice: he therefore waved this part of the treaty of Madrid. The negotiations on both sides were carried on by the duchess of Angoulême and Margaret of Austria. The king gave up all his claims to possessions in Italy, Milan, Naples, and even Asti, and abandoned all his allies in that country; he renounced all right of sovereignty over Flanders or Artois; he ceded Tournay and Arras; two millions were to be paid as ransom for the young princes; the lands of the house of Bourbon were to be restored to the heirs of that family (a stipulation, by the by, never performed); and, finally, the treaty was to be sealed by the marriage of Francis with Eleonora, the emperor's sister. This peace of Cambray, called also the "Lady's Peace," was concluded in August, 1529: it was as glorious for Charles, as it was disgraceful to France and her monarch. The emperor remained supreme master of Italy; the pope submitted, and obtained the re-establishment of the Medici in Florence, with hereditary power; the Venetians, who said that Cambray was destined to be their purgatory, were shorn of their conquests. Charles forgave Sforza, and left him the duchy of Milan. Henry VIII. reaped nothing save the emperor's enmity by his interference: the English monarch showed himself generous to Francis, by remitting to him, at this moment, a large debt. Thus was Europe pacified for the time.

On a retrospect over more than half a century preceding, we may contemplate a stirring and eventful period. War appears with all its variety of achievements and fortunes. Ambition, conquest, reverses,

intrigues, the rise and fall of families, the extension of territories and powers,— the most prominent materials of history are there to be found; and yet all this is but an idle pageant. Scarcely one of these mighty events forms a link in the great chain of cause and effect. They are inconsequential, merely a web woven to be again unravelled, like Charles VIII.'s conquest of Italy, of which not a vestige now remained to Francis. Why is this? because the selfish wills and views of individual monarchs had become the sole grounds of policy, the sole motives of action. Every thing like principle was extinguished. The people, the aristocracy, the church, had each and all humbled themselves in the dust beneath the monarch's foot. In them there is no change or progress to record. The monarch alone "playing his fantastic tricks before high heaven," occupies the stage; and the historian has but to handle the romancer's pen in following the steps, detailing the motives, describing the achievements and disasters of his hero. It is relief to have this selfishness, this monotonous operation of the same cause, here interrupted by a great principle that began to agitate all classes, and to give fresh life to the public mind in Europe. This was the great maxim of religious freedom, the groundwork of the reformation.

The present limits do not allow space to discuss the supreme authority and infallibility usurped by the popes. The most enlightened Romanists defend it more as an expediency than as a right. In barbarous times it might have had its utility, and might also have continued useful, had it been exercised according to the common rules of humanity and justice. Unfortunately no earthly throne was ever stained with more crime than the papal chair, no judgment-seat gave more iniquitous verdicts, no philosopher and logician united ever uttered dogmas more absurd. It pleaded the same prescriptive right to rule the thoughts of men that kings put forth to rule their actions; and both were allowed by man's ignorance or inertness as long as such pretensions galled him

not. In all ages, however, were spirits found to call this authority in question. Around the northern shores of the Mediterranean especially, traditions of the greater freedom of the primitive church were preserved. In Spain we find the doctrine of the real presence denied almost as soon as it was promulgated. In Provence a sect existed for centuries unnoticed, who held tenets anterior and opposed to those of Rome. We have seen the creed of the unfortunate Albigenses extinguished in blood: England had its Lollards: the higher classes of society when they flung off their respect for Rome sunk into atheism and unbelief; for the accusations against the Templars cannot be considered as totally void of foundation: and it is recorded, that Italy, uniting congenial extremes, produced frequent instances of unbelief in high places, even in the very chair of St. Peter, by the side of a bigoted and credulous faith, which it is trite but not unjust to call idolatry.

As civilisation advanced, the moral power and authority of the popes gradually declined. The long schism, and the lives and characters of the pontiffs, with many analogous circumstances, contributed to this. And later popes, by endeavouring to supply the loss of moral power by the acquisition of temporal authority, aggravated the growing disrespect for the Holy See. At the beginning of the sixteenth century France was, perhaps, the country most in advance with respect to views of reform. Though the fate of the Albigenses warned men from absolute schism, still all classes showed a distrust and enmity towards Rome. The commons remonstrated against the pope's usurpations; the nobles and even the national clergy joined in the sentiment; and the monarch, instead of dreading excommunication, was never more popular than in warring against the papal power. Louis XII., the father of his people, had struck a medal to perpetuate his own and the nation's abhorrence of papal bad faith. Its circumscription was, *Perdam Babylonis nomen*, "I will destroy the very name of Babylon." It served as a motto afterwards

for Luther, who thus borrowed his anathema against Rome from the Most Christian King.

The papal tree was then like the vine, it bore fruit only at its extremities. While the pontiff was warring at home with the Colonnas, and his imperial city itself was sacked by Bourbon; while France refused her annates, and was jealous even of the presence of a legate; the emissaries of Rome were collecting tribute round the shores of the Baltic. A monk who came to vend billets of salvation for crowns would have been received in France with a shout of derision: in Germany, on the contrary, he found a large market of credulity. Indulgences professing to remit all punishments in this world and the next, and consequently efficient to save the souls of the living or the dead, were disposed of in thousands. The avarice of the popes was still greater than the credulity of the Germans. Martin Luther called in question the efficacy of these indulgences; and his word, like a talisman, broke the spell of Romish supremacy.

To enter at large into this event and its causes belongs to the historian of Germany. Luther published his celebrated propositions in 1517. In 1521 they were condemned by the Sorbonne, the preamble of whose censure declares, "that flames and not reasoning ought to be employed against the arrogance of Luther." And what is more singular, the jurists of the parliament were equally zealous for punishing schism by death. The new doctrines came to them blended with democratic principles; and the parliament, now the court of peers, and reconciled to the aristocracy with which it was almost identified, would hear of no innovations. The king was at first inclined to be tolerant. He was a patron and lover of letters, and of learned men; and as the scholastic theologians hated the revivers and cultivators of learning equally with the Lutherans, and confounded both under the same name, Francis resisted both the parliament and the Sorbonne, and rescued more than one victim from their hands. While

he was prisoner in Spain, however, the pope took an opportunity of sending two vicars of the Holy See to pursue heretics; and a certain Le Clerc, the first martyr of reform in France, was burnt at Metz in 1525. Briconnet, bishop of Meaux, was at the same time attacked by the parliament as a favourer of heresy. He had attracted to his diocese the men of his time most celebrated for learning. This was enough to stamp the bishop and those whom he protected as heretics. They were obliged to fly, — the celebrated Henry Etienne, or Stephanus, was one of them,— and the good bishop himself never could wipe off the stigma. Margaret, the king's sister, duchess of Alençon, was early imbued with the principles of the reformers. She afterwards became queen of Navarre by her marriage with Henry d'Albret, and it was thus that her descendant Henry IV. was bred a protestant. Her influence with the king, whom she tended in his captivity, preserved the clemency of his disposition, and even was said to have rendered him not disinclined to the reformation. Zuinglius, relying on the general opinion, dedicated one of his works to the French monarch; and Francis for a long time defended both Erasmus and his friend Berquin from the persecuting Beda, the syndic of the Sorbonne.

The magnanimity and tolerance of Francis abandoned him with his good fortune. The year 1528, in which he despaired of recovering Italy or the advantages lost by the defeat of Pavia, wrought a sensible change in his conduct. He became despondent and careless in political matters, cruel and morose in temper, more licentious, if possible, in his morals, and at the same time ostensibly far more devout and more attentive to the mere offices of religion. He erected images of the Virgin; allowed poor Berquin, whom he had formerly defended, to be burned; and, notwithstanding the efforts of his sister, who herself was not secure from accusations, he let loose on his people the bloodhounds of persecution.

Francis, in these alternate moods of tolerance and

intolerance, acted chiefly according to his humour. Charles never lost sight of policy. The reformation had originated in his dominions; and its adherents had taken advantage of his absence and his occupation in wars to proceed in its establishment. He now turned his whole attention to the extinction of heresy, not only to please the pope, who had of late become his ally, but to strengthen his own authority. The empire, too, being elective, it was obvious that, should a majority of princes become protestants, the house of Austria would necessarily be excluded. Charles showed himself at first lenient. He tried fair means; those failed, and recourse was had to severity. The protestant doctrines were condemned. The princes professing them formed a league in consequence, called the League of Smalkalde. The emperor was obliged to temporise, and have recourse to tolerance again, hoping to effect by means of a general council what his imperial authority dared not risk.

The league of Smalkalde naturally sought the alliance of Francis. The French monarch, though unprepared as yet for war, did not refuse clandestine support to that powerful knot of protestants. In order to satisfy the pope and his conscience for thus making the interests of the faith stoop to those of policy, he covered the sin by burning a more than ordinary number of heretics in Paris. He was amazed and angered to find that, instead of quenching reform, he had by these means multiplied and emboldened its adherents. When the passions are excited, a near or frequent view of death brings about a contempt rather than a fear of that inevitable catastrophe. Execution or slaughter in the mass will always create an indifference to the worst, amounting to heroism. Mingle with this the leaven of religious enthusiasm, the pride of suffering for conscience-sake, the strong hope of eternal life and heavenly recompense, and you place at once man and his faith above the power of despot or inquisitor. From this very fact of our mental organisation we may argue, that religious opi-

nions are uncontrollable. But centuries were to elapse ere rulers could learn the *expediency* of toleration.

Amidst all these faults Francis gave marks about this time of that love and patronage of letters which forms the redeeming trait of his character. He established the Royal or Trilingual College, as Marot calls it, from the three endowed professorships of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. To found this institution was less difficult and praiseworthy than to defend it, which Francis did against the envy of the university and of the Sorbonne, whose bigots looked upon the knowledge of Greek as a crime; upon that of Hebrew as a heresy worthy of the stake. It was in dread of their persecution that Erasmus refused all the invitations and proffers of the king to settle in France. The latter was obliged to be contented with Budæus as his chief counsellor and friend in these matters.

The same epoch is marked by several improvements in the administration of justice, and by an attempt of Francis to remodel his army after the fashion of the ancients. He ordered the formation of seven legions, one to be raised in each of the great provinces of the kingdom, each legion to consist of 6000 men. But bodies of such unwieldy size were afterwards found unmanageable, and fell into disuse.

A lasting peace between such rivals as Charles and Francis was not to be expected. Even if the latter could have confined himself to the pursuit of pleasure, to the internal regulation of his kingdom, to the patronage of the arts and letters, for which, after the peace of Cambray, he manifested great regard; the spirit of Charles, ever restless in the cabinet, could not fail to have provoked him. At one time the emperor sent him a summons, requiring his aid against the Turks, and ending with the accusation that he had called Solyman to invade Europe. Francis was now on the closest terms of alliance with Henry VIII., who was bent on divorcing the emperor's aunt. The French king used all his influence with the pope to procure the necessary

license for Henry, but was still baffled by the influence of Charles. Clement VII. was the potentate whose alliance was most warmly disputed by the rival sovereigns. And both assailed the pontiff on a pontiff's weak side, by the offer of aggrandisement to his family. Charles proposed that Clement's niece, Catherine de' Medici should espouse Francis Sforza, duke of Milan; by which means the Medici would necessarily be ever adverse to the claims of the French kings on Milan. Francis, in opposition, offered his second son, Henry, duke of Orleans, as a husband for Catherine; and Clement, elated by the honour of an alliance with the royal house of France, exulted at the proposal. The emperor, who knew the proud character of Francis, could not believe that he would sincerely permit his son to ally with such upstarts as the Medici; and this incredulity neutralised the exertions that he might otherwise have made to obstruct the match. It took place, however, at Marseilles, where Clement and Francis met to honour the ceremonial, and to arrange the conditions of their future friendship. One of these, there is no doubt, was the vigorous prosecution and extirpation of heresy. Francis, however, reaped as usual little advantage from the negotiation. He failed to obtain for Henry VIII. the dispensation required, and that impatient monarch broke with the church in consequence. Clement himself died in the year following, and was succeeded by Paul III. of the house of Farnese.

An event soon after occurred, which was calculated to rouse all the indignation of Francis. He had of course no envoy at the petty court of Sforza, duke of Milan, on whom he could scarcely look with aught save a jealous eye. A man of fortune, named Merveille, settled at Milan, where his uncle was chancellor, aspired to the diplomatic dignity of ambassador of France. His uncle, the Milanese chancellor, was equally anxious on this point, and is said to have asked it as a boon of the French king. It was granted. In that age of intrigue Francis could not refuse to have an agent who

might prove useful at the court of Milan. The character of ambassador was to be kept a secret; but Merveille, a vain man, betrayed it in every way, and made the most ostentatious display. It came to the ears of the emperor, who instantly fulminated menaces against his creature, Sforza. The latter endeavoured to exculpate himself. Charles was too well informed, and persisted in his resentment. The duke then determined to satisfy him. Merveille had had a quarrel with a Milanese nobleman, who was now urged to attack the ambassador and his suite. The nobleman was killed; but, in return, Merveille was seized, imprisoned, and without further trial or delay, decapitated. This it may be supposed fully satisfied Charles. Francis felt the full atrocity of the insult. He wrote instantly to all the powers of Europe, and to the emperor. The latter replied by marrying his niece, the princess of Denmark, to Sforza, as if in reward for his zeal.

The French king from this moment determined upon war. He busied himself in raising money, and in levying and exercising troops. He forebore, however, to commence the attack, while the emperor was engaged in his expedition against the infidels on the coast of Africa. It may be perceived that these rival monarchs were the first who paid attention to the public mind in Europe, the first who propitiated popular opinion, at that time a novel means of support, and stood in awe of its hostility. Charles departed on this distant expedition immediately after the insult offered to Francis in the affair of Merveille. By the enterprise the former hoped to raise his character with the Christian community; and should Francis, obeying his resentment, make an attack whilst he was absent, there was the reproach at hand, that the French king was always in league with the infidel, and armed in his support. Francis, however, at this crisis fought Charles in the emperor's own politic manner. He himself remained quiet, but by intrigue and the aid of money he enabled the duke of Wirtemburg to recover his duchy from Charles's bro-

ther, the king of the Romans. The duke belonged to the protestant league, and thus the imperial party was doubly weakened in Germany.

"It was the fate of Francis," says a catholic writer, "to befriend the enemies of his religion." He now aided the Genoese in throwing off the yoke of the duke of Savoy, his uncle, another friend and relative, whom Francis had contrived to alienate from him. And it was the freedom of Geneva that spread far and wide through France the principles of reform. Those principles or tenets had hitherto been confined in that kingdom to men of letters, whose studies and consequent exercise of reason at once unveiled the absurdities of Rome, and to personages of influence, whose taste led them to patronise learning. Thus Meaux under its enlightened bishop, was truly considered a nest of heresy. Thus Stephanus, Ramus, and Marot were protestants, as were also the ladies of the court, who, from their sex, had more opportunities than men had of knowing the hypocrisy and corruption of the prelates of the church. The queen of Navarre, the king's sister, Rénée, duchess of Ferrara, his sister-in-law, even the duchess d'Etampes, his mistress, were all openly declared for tolerance, and secretly inclined to the Reformation. When Marot, almost the first of French poets, was obliged to quit France for his religious opinions, he took refuge at Ferrara with the duchess. At the same time, a young deacon, whose name Cauvin was rendered in Latin Calvinus, though a native of Noyon in Picardy, protected as well as Marot by the queen of Navarre, sought the same place of safety.

Men of letters and courtly dames, however, personages naturally tranquil, if not timid, were very unfit propagators of a new religion; although, perhaps, if ideas of reform had taken birth in this class of society only, and thus gradually spread lower, their aim might have been effected more gradually indeed, but far more generally. In Germany, however, owing to the state of society and government there, as well as to the character of Luther,

the appeal was at once made to the popular mind. The class of the burgesses was in that country most numerous and uncontrolled. The emperor was absent. Authority was divided among many princes, some wise and patient enough to hear reason, others grasping at a pretext for independence, none chained down by policy, as Francis was, to a fixed line of orthodoxy. The people were there at liberty to listen; and the antipapal doctrines spread with a rapidity that nothing could check.

In France, on the contrary, there was no Luther, nor any scope for a Luther. Reform lurked, like a treasonable secret, among a few trembling conspirators. The difference of language prevented the spreading of the popular flame across the Rhine. And if in a few cases an individual or two brought, or caught, or attempted to spread the contagion, the crime was instantly expiated and silenced at the stake. As soon, however, as a town, in which the French language was spoken, and which was situated beyond French authority, became free, as was the case with Geneva, a *foyer*, as the French say, or a hearth, was found, where the fire might be freely lit and kept burning, so as to send sparks and spread combustion throughout the whole of the neighbouring kingdom.

On a certain morning in October, 1534, placards appeared, abusive of the mass and of the clergy. The eucharist itself was scouted; a fact which marks the opinions as coming from Switzerland, where Zuinglian tenets prevailed. These placards were affixed to the gates of the castle of Blois, where the king was. In a rage he departed for Paris. Similar placards immediately appeared on the pillars of the Louvre. The insult awoke all the monarch's zeal: he ordered a solemn procession, in which he appeared in person. He himself declared in public, that he would cut off his own arm, or slay his very son, could he suspect either to be infected with heresy; and he concluded the religious ceremony by burning six heretics, after a new and more cruel fashion than ordinary. On an erect pole another

was transversely balanced. To one end the unfortunate heretic was tied, and a fire lighted under him, into which and out of which he was alternately dipped and raised, that his torments might be sufficiently acute and prolonged.*

Francis, however, was more hurt in his dignity than in his religious faith, by the insult that had been offered. He had been early warned of the popular and democratic nature of reform, and he hence took a special dislike to the Zuinglian or Swiss reformers. About the very time that the solemn processions and burnings took place in Paris, Francis was inviting Melancthon to that capital, in order to devise some reconciliation between the contending parties. No doubt this was partly to conciliate the protestant league, on whose alliance Francis depended. But from the letter, which the king himself wrote to Melancthon so late as June, 1535, it is evident that his opposition to reform was moderate and enlightened; and that when he persecuted, it was more from heat and haste of temper than from settled bigotry.

Whatever were the motives or principles of Francis, he forwarded the cause of reform in France by aiding Geneva to throw off the yoke of Savoy, certainly more than he could check it by edicts or condemnations. Geneva gained its liberty about 1534. No sooner was it independent than the city renounced its allegiance to Rome. Farel became its minister of religion; and he appointed Calvin as his coadjutor. A squabble about the communion having disturbed that solemn ceremony at Easter, both ministers were banished from the town. But Calvin, who was equally eloquent with tongue and with pen, was the very person needed by a rising sect as a defender and a guide. He had courage, zeal, and learning. Educated at one time for the church, and at a later period for the law, he united the information requisite for both professions. He had travelled, and seen

* Francis issued a decree at this time, condemning those who concealed heretics as themselves guilty of heresy, and promising one fourth of the confiscated property of heretics to the informer.

two courts; had been the friend of the queen of Navarre and of the duchess of Ferrara; and was much more fitted than Luther to be the effective preacher of a new doctrine to civilised France. He was soon recalled to Geneva, where he succeeded in establishing that form of religion which bears his name, and which soon spread from thence over the greater part of his native kingdom.

The enmity of the duke of Savoy proved a serious obstacle to Francis. He could no longer penetrate to Milan, without subduing that duchy. In the summer of 1525, the admiral, de Brion, attacked Savoy, and took several towns, while the duke in vain summoned the emperor to his assistance. When the French, however, had reached the summit of the Alpine ridge, tidings were brought of the death of Francis Sforza. The king was thus left without an object of vengeance. His rights to Milan revived also: he had waved them but in favour of Sforza, who had recently died without offspring. Francis, indeed, did not claim the duchy for himself, but for his second son, who, by his mother Claude, was descended from Louis XII. and Valentine Visconti. He hoped by putting forward his second son, rather than the dauphin, to remove all jealousy in the Italians, who would dislike to see Milan attached to the dominion of France.

An ambassador was sent to the emperor, claiming the investiture of Milan for Henry duke of Orleans. That prince, without an idea of granting the request, hesitated to refuse it altogether; and, practising the subterfuges, the forms, and delays of the papal court, wasted months in negotiating, whilst he was all the time arming and making preparations of a hostile character. Francis, on his side, pushed the war in Piedmont, took Turin, and encamped before Vercelli, hesitating to break openly with the emperor, or invade his dominions. Charles was in the mean time cajoling the French ambassadors, and leading them to hope for the grant of Milan to the duke of Orleans. In expectation of this they attended

him from Naples to Rome. There in full consistory, not only before the pope and cardinals, but in the presence of the public—he would allow no one to be excluded—the emperor at once threw off dissimulation, and burst forth in furious reproaches against the French king. He recapitulated the whole history of their differences, his victory, their treaties, the bad faith of Francis, and his tacit enmity ever since he had been guilty of it. With little consistency, he at one moment admitted the possibility of his granting Milan to the duke of Angoulême, third son of the king; at the next he gave full vent to his choler, and proposed to fight Francis in single combat, in a boat, or on a bridge, with poniards, in their shirts,—offering, at the same time, to stake the duchy of Milan against that of Burgundy on the issue. Not content with this, Charles descended to the meanest and most puerile scolding:—"Had I soldiers and generals such as his, I would go with my hands tied, and a rope round my neck, to ask mercy of my antagonist." Thus, for the second time, did Charles show that the most politic and strictly controlled temper is apt to fall into the grossest extremes of indecorum and violence when passion is allowed to overpower habitual reserve.

The ambassadors of France and the ministers of Charles himself were alike astonished at this unexpected gust of reproach. The latter endeavoured to soften and excuse it; as did Charles himself during a subsequent interview: and the account of it must have been also much softened to Francis, for that prince showed no susceptibility or passion, but replied with coolness and moderation. The negotiations were continued, notwithstanding a scene so well calculated to put a stop to them, but, as may be supposed, they proved ineffectual.

The causes of the previous dissimulation and sudden arrogance of Charles now became manifest. The army of De Leyva, that had hitherto been inferior to the French, was, during these delays, augmented by reinforcements to 50,000 men. The admiral was obliged

to retire before it. Charles was puffed up with pride, and certain of success. He determined on invading France, which he had vague hopes of conquering. As to Provence, at which he immediately aimed, he already looked upon that part of the kingdom as his.

At the same time, Charles exerted himself with his usual activity to blacken his rival in public opinion. In Italy he accused him as the enemy of the church; in Germany he aggravated his burning of protestants, and with such success, that Francis could not raise a single lansquenet in that country. Switzerland, now in a great measure protestant, was no longer to be regarded as a school of mercenary soldiers; and the French king, though he congratulated himself on his own foresight in the establishment of national legions, had as yet but little confidence in this untried infantry.

Francis therefore repressed his own natural impetuosity, and determined not to hazard a battle. Piedmont was evacuated, except Turin and a few towns intrusted to the marquis of Saluces. He may be enumerated among the early friends of the king, who now proved faithless to him. In this instance historians do not discover the cause in the conduct of Francis: the marquis, a believer in astrology, had reason to conclude from the stars that the fortunes of France were on the decline. He therefore deserted to the emperor, and betrayed, as far as lay in his power, the trust reposed in him. Annebaut, however, still defended Turin. Contrary to the advice of his ablest generals, Charles resolved to pursue his conquests and march into France. Even the veteran De Leyva flung himself from the chair, to which the gout confined him, and fell at the feet of his sovereign to dissuade him; but in vain. That monarch was, in his own imagination, an emperor of ancient Rome, and, like the original Cæsar, marched to subdue Gaul. In order to preserve the analogy, he drew up his troops on passing the Alps, and harangued them after the forms exemplified in the Latin historians.

Montmorency was intrusted by Francis with the de-

fence of Provence. That noble soldier, who had hitherto given ample proofs of valour, now resolved to act the part of Fabius. He formed a strong camp below Avignon, at the confluence of the Rhine and the Durance. He ordered all the open country to be laid waste, and the smaller towns to be dismantled; Avignon itself, Arles, and Marseilles, being the only places garrisoned and defended. This order was executed most mercilessly; and the towns which resisted the general's orders of devastation were stormed by their own troops and destroyed. Even Aix, the capital of Provence, was not spared. The emperor proceeded through the desolate country, harassed by the peasantry, but unable to meet with the army of his enemy. He advanced to Marseilles and to Arles, and showed an inclination to besiege those towns. But he was repulsed from Marseilles; and his rear-guard, commanded by the duke of Alva, was severely handled. At Arles he had no better success.

Francis was in the mean time at Valence with a part of his forces. Bad tidings were arriving day after day from the north. The town of Guise had been taken. The imperialists were making progress on the deserted frontier. A family disaster occurred about the same time to oppress Francis. His eldest son, the dauphin, died, having taken a draught of cold water when heated with a game at ball: poison, however, was loudly declared to be the cause; even the emperor was accused of a crime that could bring him no advantage. Catherine de' Medici, wife of the king's second son, who now became dauphin, was also accused, with more plausibility, but on no stronger proof.

The success of Montmorency's plan of defence, and the retreat of the emperor, brought consolation to Francis. The duke of Orleans, now dauphin, begged permission to repair to the camp at Avignon. When he arrived there, it required all Montmorency's firmness to prevent the French youth with the prince at their head from sallying out to give battle to Charles. Francis himself came to Avignon some time afterwards. Charles

was then in full rout, retreating along the shores of the Mediterranean, his way strewn with dead bodies (for pestilence had begun to thin his ranks), and also with horses, arms, baggage, and all the wreck of a ruined army. Francis could not take advantage of his enemy's discomfiture. He was recalled to the north by the danger of Peronne, then besieged by the count of Nassau, and defended by De la Mark, mareschal de Fleuranges. The valour of the mareschal obliged the enemy to raise the siege; but this gallant knight and soldier did not long survive: he died, leaving behind him those chivalric memoirs of the reign of Francis which bear his name. The emperor in the mean time continued his retreat: he had lost the better part of his army, and De Leyva himself amongst other generals. Charles instantly embarked for Spain to conceal his mortification from the Italians, who had so lately witnessed his arrogance and heard his bravadoes.

Francis had not replied to the insolence and vituperation of the emperor. The defence he made was indeed the best answer. The next campaign, 1537, was opened or preceded by a scene correspondent to the public invective of Charles in the Roman consistory. The French king held a *bed of justice*, or solemn sitting of parliament, in which his advocate, allowing the cession that Francis had made of his suzerainty over Flanders and Artois, argued and declared that such cession was null; that the monarch had not the power to forego the rights of his crown, and that Charles was in consequence the vassal of the king of France for those provinces. This being established to the satisfaction of the court, Charles, as a refractory and disobedient vassal, was summoned to appear and answer for his conduct; and on his non-appearance, Flanders and Artois were declared forfeited to the crown,—an empty mimicry of the forms by which in a ruder age Philip Augustus thought fit to sanction those acquisitions, made by the sword.

Francis attempted to follow this part of the example

also, and marched into Flanders, as if to fulfil the decree of his court. He at first met with some success, and afterwards, by a blunder of his own in impatiently raising his camp, lost the advantage. His enemies laid siege to Therouenne. Montmorency and the dauphin were marching to its relief, when the queen-dowager of Hungary, sister of the emperor and regent of the Netherlands, proposed a truce. It was concluded in July, but was confined to the northern frontiers of France. In Piedmont the interests of the king were forgotten in the dissensions of the Italian generals, whom he found it necessary to employ. One of these having been assailed by a libel of the notorious Aretino, attributed it to the malignity of the other; a challenge and dire feuds were the consequence. The marquis of Saluces met the fate he merited for his treachery. He was slain by a shot from a window of the castle of Carmagnola. The way in which his death was avenged is characteristic of the marquis del Guasto, the Spanish general. When the gallant garrison of Carmagnola surrendered, the marquis expressed the greatest admiration for their valour, especially he added for those who defended a certain window. "For my part," exclaimed a soldier, "I was there, and fired many a shot." Del Guasto ordered him instantly to be hanged up to the window. Those Italian wars altogether corrupted the high honour and generosity of the ancient Spanish character. The Italians themselves, in consequence of their unfixed and divided rule, their ever-changing allegiance, and the petty warfare of intrigue, incessant amongst them, had deteriorated in character; and the Spaniards adopting the lax morals and contempt of honour which they here found, and which their command of mercenary troops, as well as their own subjection and service to an astute and politic sovereign increased, compounded their own pride with other bad qualities, and formed a character as depraved as history can well paint. When in course of time it imbibed the zeal of religious persecutions, it became truly demoniacal. Pescara and Del Guasto

united perfidy with cruelty, but in both respects the name of Alva was destined soon to eclipse theirs.

During the following year the truce was extended to Piedmont, each party guarding what they held. Charles, in addition to his ill success, his total want of funds, and the rapid progress of the reformation among the German states, while war prevented the emperor from checking or interfering with them, was induced to treat by the alliance which Francis had newly formed with the Turks. Those barbarians, flushed with recent conquest, were the terror of eastern Europe; and Hungary was already in their power. In these circumstances the pope undertook to mediate a peace. Both sovereigns joined the pontiff at Nice. They refused to see each other, and it was found impossible to fix the terms of a treaty; but a truce for ten years was proclaimed in July, 1538. Charles, while at Nice, was so full of suspicions, that he lodged on board his galley. He now sailed in it for Barcelona, but being driven by the wind upon the coast of Provence, he sent a messenger to Francis, desiring an interview. A little reflection had calmed his resentment and removed his mistrust; and it is probable that Charles already began to meditate that passage through France, which he soon afterwards made. A personal interview with Francis could best inform him as to the prudence of such a step. The French king hastened at Charles's invitation to meet and to welcome him. The monarchs met at Aigues Mortes, visited each other, forgot their mutual quarrels, insults, challenges, and hate. Francis even consented to receive Andrew Doria, and the good nature of the monarch showed itself when he said, "Here we are united, my brother the emperor and I. We must henceforth have the same friends and the same enemies; we must equip together a naval armament against the Turks, and you, Doria, shall have the command."

On his return to Compiegne, Francis was taken dangerously ill, of the same malady, it is said, which afterwards occasioned his death. He gradually recovered,

however, from this attack. Early in 1539, the people of Ghent applied to him, offering to become his subjects. Those turbulent citizens were meditating a revolt against the emperor. They complained of certain war-taxes, that had nevertheless been voted by their representatives in the states of Flanders, refused to pay them, and defied the emperor's authority. Francis, it might be thought, would have eagerly embraced such an opportunity to annoy his rival. Peace, however, had been just concluded, and Charles had evidently made many fair promises at Aigues Mortes; besides, the chivalric Francis detested the burgesses, as a class of whose turbulence and fickleness he had full experience in the Genoese. In lieu, therefore, of encouraging the malcontents, he at once conveyed intelligence of their intrigue to the emperor.

That prince, anxious to crush the rebellion at Ghent ere it spread or gathered force, was perplexed how to get thither, an embarrassment which strongly demonstrates the absurdity of scattered dominion. If he went by sea, he feared the ports of England and of Flanders, both hostile. By land, through his own dominions, the protestant states of Germany, equally unfriendly to him, were to be traversed. Through France lay the shortest path; and Charles, on receiving the amicable warning of Francis, no longer hesitated. Resorting to his usual bait, he sent to promise the investiture of Milan to the king's second son, and at the same time asked permission to pass through France: it was of course granted. The two princes and Montmorency met the emperor at Bayonne. Francis himself advanced as far as Chatelherault in Poitou to receive him, and magnificent festivals celebrated their entry into each town: that given at Paris excelled every thing of the kind in splendour. The prisoners were every where liberated at the emperor's approach. In the midst of all this gaiety, the mind of Charles was ill at ease. Francis was counselled by many to retain the emperor till he fulfilled his promise of granting Milan;

at least till that promise was solemnly renewed in writing. But Francis scorned to take so base an advantage, and Montmorency was firm in the same honourable opinion. The latter was now constable of the kingdom, and possessed the chief influence with the king. A soldier of high honour himself, he coincided with his master in placing implicit reliance on the emperor's word.

"Do you see that fair lady?" said Francis, pointing out to Charles the duchess d'Etampes: "she advises me not to let you depart from Paris until you have revoked the treaty of Madrid." The emperor was at first disconcerted, but rallied, and replied coolly, "If the advice is good, it should be followed." Charles, nevertheless, contrived, on the following day, to let fall a diamond ring at the feet of the duchess; and when she picked it up, and proffered it to him, he obliged her to retain it.

Triboulet, the court fool of Francis, set down Charles on his tablets as one of his own class, for risking to pass through France. "But if I let him pass?" observed Francis. "Then," said Triboulet, "I will rub out his name, and write yours in its place, as the most egregious fool of any."

Francis acted the noble part, and refrained from pressing for the Milanese till Charles had reached his own frontier; and then the affair of Ghent was so pressing, that the emperor had time to think of no other. Montmorency was obliged to return with this excuse. Charles reaped all the benefit he could expect from his speedy movements. The people of Ghent were terrified, and submitted. It was supposed that he would spare his native city. He entered it, however, and on his very birthday, with no feelings of clemency: twenty-six of the ringleaders were put to death. All the ancient privileges and rights of Ghent were abrogated, and a fortress was raised to keep the town in subjection. So much had municipal and kingly power changed their relative situations in little more than a century.

No sooner was this triumph gained, than Charles threw off the mask, and not only refused to keep his promise as to the Milanese with Francis, but denied that he had ever made it. He even endeavoured to take a base advantage of the friendly and cordial reception given to him by that monarch. Venice had been, of all the powers of Italy, the staunch friend of France. The marquis del Guasto now represented to the Venetians the firm alliance between Charles and Francis, and accordingly pressed them to join the emperor against the Turks. But the wary Venetians put no faith in the reconciliation of the two monarchs, and were deaf to all the proffers of del Guasto. In order to counteract this intrigue, Francis despatched as ambassadors Fregose and Rincon, the former to Venice, the latter to Constantinople; to explain to both courts, that although the emperor had visited Paris, yet so far was this from being a sign of strict alliance, that it had rather, through the bad faith of Charles, produced a contrary effect. Del Guasto resolved to intercept those ambassadors, hoping to discover all the views of Francis in their despatches: he expected also to find, in that addressed to the sultan, a document which, if published, would disgrace Francis in the eyes of Christian Europe. The ambassadors were accordingly waylaid, by order of del Guasto, as they descended the Po in a bark, and murdered.

When Francis exclaimed against this fresh outrage, the emperor justified del Guasto for the deed. The former could find no retribution but in declaring war, which accordingly ensued in 1542. Before entering upon its details, let us cast a glance at the intrigues and revolutions of the court. The dauphin Henry, not content with his wife, Catherine de' Medici, had followed his father's example, in selecting and supporting a mistress. Catherine was young, accomplished, and not unlovely. Henry preferred a lady (Diana of Poictiers) old enough to be his mother. Great rivalry arose between the king's mistress and the prince's mistress,—an exemplary and edifying emulation! The duchess d'Etampes

slightingly observed, that she was only born on the day that Diana was married; and the insult was not forgiven. The former felt that at the death of Francis she must suffer the resentment of his successor. She therefore sought to create a friend and supporter in the duke of Orleans, next brother to the king; and she intrigued and corresponded with the emperor, to procure for him an independent appanage either in Milan or in the Low Countries.

These intrigues of the duchess d'Etampes, but partially known to history, were no doubt one of the causes of the tergiversation of the emperor respecting the so much debated investiture. The court was thus broken into two parties; the king, his mistress, De Brion, and others, on one side; the dauphin, with Diana, supported by the constable Montmorency, on the other. Just before the war broke out, Montmorency fell into disgrace, through the play of this intrigue. Historians have attributed that misfortune to his advice of letting Charles go free; but such a reason is improbable and insufficient. He was exiled to Chantilly; a palace of which the princely splendour has been attested by lord Herbert of Cherbury.

The temper of Francis became much soured at this time. He was worn down by a malady, under which he pined without hopes of cure; and in his treatment of friends, as well as of religious dissidents, he approached somewhat to the savage disposition of Henry VIII. Not only Montmorency was now disgraced, but Chabot, admiral de Brion, an especial favourite, and the friend of the duchess d'Etampes, was imprisoned for a trifling crime. It seems as if a sense of impartiality actuated Francis to humble one of each party—a friend of either mistress. Poor De Brion, more sensitive than Montmorency, died under his disgrace, and Francis was afflicted at his fate. The monarch granted him the vain reparation of a splendid tomb. The vengeance of the duchess d'Etampes fell upon Poyet the chancellor, who had been inveterate against De Brion. The king, however, whose

conscience smote him for having abstracted de Brion from his rightful judges in parliament, and sent him before a commission, would not suffer the same injustice to be done to Poyet. He was tried for malversation, and condemned to five years' imprisonment, and a fine so considerable, that it stripped him of all his wealth. The cardinal of Lorraine, brother of Guise, at the same time lost his credit. Francis seemed to have conceived a disgust against all his old friends. In his present stern and serious mood he could not tolerate the license and rapacity which he had formerly encouraged.

The persons now intrusted by Francis with the management of his affairs were d'Annebaut, recently created admiral, and the cardinal de Tournon. Their probity is unimpeached, but their talents were unfortunately mediocre. The war languished in Piedmont. Conquests in Italy were considered unlucky; and it was resolved to attack Roussillon in the south and Luxembourg in the north. Charles, as he had subdued Tunis at the commencement of the last war with France, now led an expedition against Algiers, either to show his contempt for the king, or to prove his greater zeal in the cause of Christianity. It strikes me that both enterprises were owing to a superstitious desire to earn, by defeating the infidels, a store of merit and good fortune, to be expended in the war with France. The expedition, however, proved unfortunate: Charles lost his fleet, his artillery, and a great portion of his army. His brother Ferdinand, king of the Romans, was at the same time equally unsuccessful against the Turks in Hungary.

Notwithstanding the low state to which the emperor's affairs were thus reduced, the French arms made little progress. The dauphin commanded the expedition against Roussillon. His brother, the duke of Orleans, supported by the duke de Guise and the count d'Enghien, entered the province of Luxembourg, which they over-ran and conquered. But hearing on a sudden that a battle was to be fought in the south, the young prince abandoned the army, and weakened it in his haste to

participate in the triumphs of his brother. It was a false report. The dauphin, instead of vanquishing, was obliged to raise the siege of Perpignan, and Luxembourg was reconquered by the imperialists. The brothers, du Bellay, one of whom wrote the history of these wars, alone supported the credit of the royal arms in Piedmont.

The effects of these great efforts of the king to sustain the war against so potent an adversary became evident in the discontents of his people, produced by the pressure of extraordinary taxes. The English reader cannot have failed to remark how the power of levying taxes fell into the hands of the sovereign. It was under Charles VII., the king who reconquered France from the English, that the *taille* became perpetual, as a war-tax. The *gabelle,* an impost on salt, the *aides,* a kind of excise, grew in the same manner to be under the control of the king, who raised them at pleasure. Francis increased all these taxes to an extent which it is difficult to ascertain: and this revenue not meeting his expenses, he borrowed large sums, and sold many of the domains of the crown. The *gabelle,* or salt-tax, was, however, what pressed most heavily on the people; not only by reason of the dearness of that necessary of life, but also through the vexations practised by the collectors and overseers, a tribe ever hateful to the people. The provinces in which salt was raised had hitherto enjoyed various advantages: they exported it duty-free to other countries; and as the tax was raised on the sale, not on the production of the commodity, the inhabitants of those parts could easily secure a store sufficient for their own consumption without paying the duty. Francis, however, ordered that the tax should be levied at the raising or making of the salt. The sufferers were indignant; and those of Rochelle, who considered this an infringement of their privileges, rebelled. Francis did not lose a moment in marching to put down this insurrection ere it gained ground. He appeared with an army of lansquenets before Rochelle, and the town sub-

mitted. The king was at that time engaged in rivalry with the emperor Charles, who had drawn down upon himself the condemnation of Europe by his harsh treatment of the people of Ghent. Francis, therefore, obedient to this policy, as well as to the natural generosity of his temper, pardoned the insurgents of Rochelle. "Speak no more of revolt," said he, to the humbled and penitent citizens: "forget it, as I do. I see here none but my children; in me you behold a father. My rival may spill the blood of his unfortunate subjects of Ghent: it is a pleasure worthy of him. My delight, on the contrary, is to recover the hearts of my subjects." Here was one signal benefit produced by the progress of civilisation, and the communication of events throughout Europe. The cruelty, and consequent unpopularity of one monarch, served as a beacon to warn the other, and direct him into the path of clemency.

The campaign of 1543 brought Francis another enemy and another ally:—the enemy was Henry VIII., whose natural hatred to France rose in proportion as its monarch proved victorious. The two kings had not been friends since the affair of Catherine's divorce; but the receipt of a pension from France, under the treaty of 1525, as well as the mortal quarrel between Henry and the emperor, preserved the former from openly breaking with Francis. Nevertheless the marriage of James king of Scotland with a princess of France was felt sorely by Henry's jealous temper. When this princess died, James was allowed to espouse another lady of royal blood, Mary of Lorraine. This was a new grievance. The Tudors, at least Henry VIII. and his daughter Elizabeth, were peculiarly jealous of any one who sought the happiness of marriage; such an event always caused them a pang. When a rival or an enemy met with good fortune in a match, their envy was sure to vent itself in hostility. Henry could not forgive Francis his alliance with Scotland, and his patronage of its young king; and when the pension to England ceased to be paid, owing to the necessities of the French

monarch, another tie of interest was converted into an hostile claim. Catherine of Aragon and Anne Boleyn were both dead by this time, and thus were removed the obstacles to an alliance between Henry and the emperor. It was concluded. They agreed to announce it to Francis, by summoning him, in the face of Europe, to give up his odious alliance with the Turk.

Ten thousand English came to swell the army of the emperor in Flanders. With these he crushed the duke of Cleves, who had espoused the side of Francis, and who was to have received in marriage the hand of Jeanne d'Albret, heiress of the crown of Navarre. Francis was either inactive or unfortunate in the support of his friend: the duke was obliged to make the most humble submissions. Charles, after this, advanced and formed the siege of Landrecies, which was stubbornly defended. Francis approached with an army: he was no longer anxious to give battle with the impetuosity of youth; and, after throwing succours into Landrecies, he retreated. Charles raised the siege; but, in return, succeeded in surprising the more important town of Cambray.

It will be recollected that the ambassadors despatched by Francis to Venice and to Constantinople, to explain the hollowness of his reconciliation with the emperor, were intercepted, and slain by del Guasto. A messenger was now selected of the most enterprising character, a man calculated to perform the perilous journey and accomplish the difficult negotiation. He was an adventurer whom we shall hereafter have occasion to recognise as the baron de la Garde. He reached the court of Solyman: after enduring much indignity he obtained a hearing; exculpated his master; and induced Solyman to despatch Barbarossa to the coast of Provence. There a junction was formed between the French and Turkish fleets; and Nice was besieged by them in concert; but even that insignificant town they failed to take. Francis incurred the dishonour of an alliance with the infidels,

without reaping any advantage. Solyman committed some vain and not triumphant ravages as he retreated.

The army in Piedmont was now intrusted by Francis to the young count d'Enghien: he was brother to Antoine de Bourbon duke de Vendôme, afterwards, by his marriage with Jeanne d'Albret, king of Navarre. The count was an active commander, and he continued his operations against del Guasto, the imperialist general, during the whole winter.

In the spring of 1544, he besieged Carignano. Del Guasto, aware that the French had orders not to fight, marched to its relief. The count instantly despatched Montluc, afterwards mareschal, to court, to obtain the permission of Francis to offer battle. The council decided against risking it. Montluc, who was present, showed his impatience at their timidity by all kinds of contortions. The king was amused, and ordered him to speak. The Gascon (Montluc was of Gascony) did so, with a peculiarity of accent and gesture that amused his hearers, and that did not mar his eloquence: he warmly recommended a battle; and Francis, caught by an enthusiasm once so natural to himself, was won by Montluc's zeal, and, despite the dissuasions of his council, sent D'Enghien permission to fight. No sooner was this known than the court became a desert; every young lord and courtier set out post to Piedmont to share in the perils and the glory of the action.

The battle was fought at Cerisoles on the 14th of April. The imperialists far outnumbered the French; but mercenaries composed the greater part of the strength of either army. All the forenoon was spent in the firing of the arquebuss, in manœuvres, and in vain attempts of either army to turn and take its antagonist in flank. Neither army wished to advance, as each was apprehensive that by so doing its artillery would be in a measure masked, while itself would be fully exposed to the guns of the enemy. This evinces the immobility of artillery in those days, and the little skill with which it was managed. The French, most impatient of the con-

tending parties, ordered the Swiss of their centre to advance. They were discouraged by the fire of the artillery; and the lansquenets, opposed to them in superior numbers, repulsed them. To the left of the Swiss were posted, first the French infantry, and beyond them light troops, either Italians or men of Gruyère. When the centre wavered, the count led the French infantry to its support. The Italians and the men of Gruyère, thus abandoned, turned and fled. And d'Enghien, on looking round, seeing himself deserted, and the enemies advancing in his flank, was in despair. He placed his sword so that he might fall and die upon it. On reflection, he thought it better to perish by the hand of the enemy: collecting, therefore, an hundred straggling horse, he charged the lansquenets with that desperation which the search of death inspires; when lo! before his furious charge, several times repeated, the lansquenets shrunk, became disordered, and at last fled. The fact was, that the rest of the French line had been victorious, and an elevation of the ground had concealed their advantage from d'Enghien. This success was in a great manner owing to an order given in the beginning of the day by del Guasto to the prince of Salerno, to keep back, and not to engage his Italians, in whom the commanders had little confidence. Del Guasto had lost his presence of mind, and forgot to issue any later order; through which neglect a great portion of his army remained inactive. Indeed, the prince of Salerno withdrew his troops from the field without having struck a blow. Del Guasto fled early, and displayed a considerable lack of courage, although Paulus Jovius, of whom he is the hero, represents him as a very Mars. Del Guasto presents the example of a general, able and ingenious in planning and conducting a campaign, but incapable of cool discernment in the heat of action. Since the day of Marignano, victory had been a stranger to the French; and the count D'Enghien reaped a harvest of glory by the achievement. Unfortunately the young prince did not live to fulfil the hopes entertained

of him. In a year or two afterwards, whilst at la Roche-Guyon, supporting a mock-siege against the dauphin and other young men of the court, a box, inadvertently flung from the window, fell upon him and caused his death.

Francis was assailed on so many points by so many and such powerful foes, that he could not take advantage of the victory of Cerisoles. Twelve thousand men were instantly drawn from the army of d'Enghien, to reinforce those of the north, and no progress was made towards Milan. The emperor and Henry VIII. had agreed, each to lead an army, the one through Champagne, the other through Picardy, straight to Paris, without staying to make conquests or form sieges. The first part of the plan was performed, not the latter. Charles invested St. Dizier, and Henry besieged Boulogne. Had they executed their original intention, they might have dictated peace to Francis in his capital. The emperor at length perceived his mistake. He marched towards the centre of the kingdom, summoning Henry to do the same. The latter showed no inclination to second him, and still remained before Boulogne, of which he made himself master.

The emperor had gained possession of St. Dizier by artifice; for he sent a false order under the seal of the duke of Guise to the commander of the town, ordering him to surrender. Some historians assert that it was the duchess d'Etampes that furnished this means of victory to the emperor, from jealousy to the dauphin. The king, confined to his chamber by illness, was in despair at the capture of St. Dizier. "Ah! my God," he exclaimed, "how dearly do you sell me my kingdom. Get you to church," he continued, addressing his sister the queen of Navarre, "and there utter for me my prayer to God, that since it is his will to favour the emperor, I may at least be spared the grief of seeing him encamped under the walls of my capital." The dauphin was charged with the defence of Champagne. He took the opportunity of beseeching his father to

pardon Montmorency; observing, that the defender of Provence could best defend Champagne. The request angered, without persuading, the king. The emperor advanced as far as the Marne, which it was his object to cross. He succeeded in seizing the magazines of Epernay and Château Thierry, owing, it is again asserted, to information derived from the duchess d'Etampes. Paris was in alarm. The king rode about, and endeavoured to re-assure the citizens. "The Lord defend you from fear, my children," said he; "I will defend you from the enemy."

The emperor's sudden spirit of enterprise had in the mean time given way to his usual habits of caution and delay. Instead of pushing across the Marne, fighting and advancing upon Paris, he retired in search of provisions. The heart of Charles having failed him, and the opportunity being at the same time lost, negotiations were willingly entered into by both monarchs. They sent a despatch to Henry, then on the point of capturing Boulogne, but he disdainfully refused to join in an accommodation. Charles and Francis, therefore, concluded a separate treaty at Crespy, in September, 1544. It chief stipulation was, that the duke of Orleans should espouse either the daughter or the niece of the emperor, who in return should give as a dowry either the Milanese or the Low Countries. A peace thus terminating to the advantage of the duke of Orleans alone, plainly denotes the intrigues and interests of the duchess d'Etampes, who sought, in the king's second son, a support against the enmity of the dauphin. The delay, however, and the loose manner in which the fulfilment of the terms was secured, showed that the emperor was not sincere; and at the same time that the king was not a dupe. One desired to retire with impunity; the other was glad to allow this. The dauphin protested strongly against this treaty, of which he did not perceive the hollowness.

Between the English, who held Boulogne, and the French, the war still continued. Francis, for the first

time, made his greatest efforts on a new element. Ordering his Mediterranean galleys to join those of the western ports at Havre, he collected a fleet of 136 ships: the king went with his court to behold it put to sea, and gave a banquet on board the largest vessel, one of 800 tons, which accidentally took fire, and was burned ere it quitted the harbour. Annebaut, who, as admiral, commanded the fleet, sailed for the Isle of Wight. The English fleet, amounting to about sixty sail, came out from Portsmouth to cannonade, but avoided an action with such a superior force. The French landed and insulted the English, in order to provoke them to come out; but failing in this purpose, the fleet sailed back to its own shores. By land they endeavoured to retake Boulogne, but with no better success. In one of the skirmishes near this town, the comte d'Aumale was struck in the face with a javelin, the whole head of which entered between his mouth and nose. His recovery appeared a miracle to the chirurgeons of that day. His son, afterwards duke of Guise, was signalised with the appellation of *Le Balafré*, for a far more trifling scar. Peace was the result of this campaign. Francis agreed to continue to Henry the usual yearly tribute, and an additional sum was to be paid for Boulogne, which was to be restored to the French after the lapse of eight years.

The opinions of the reformers in the mean time, though they made progress in France, were not openly avowed. Francis was a popular prince: his clemency at Rochelle, joined to his general character and personal qualities, made him beloved; and the strong feeling of loyalty, which in Germany promoted religion, in France kept the people from dissenting openly from the faith of the monarch. A few heretics were burned from time to time to grace a festival, or display the zeal of the monarch; but wholesale persecution was as yet unknown. Unfortunately the reign of Francis was at this period stained with the blood of a whole province, wantonly and unjustly spilled. The reader cannot have forgotten the

crusades against the Albigenses, those primitive reformers of the thirteenth century. Great as had been the slaughter, they were not all extinct; and, under the name of Vaudois, the sect subsisted from that day chiefly in the provinces eastward of the Rhone, where the persecution had been little felt. Forgotten by the inquisitors of the church, that simple people had preserved in their remote valleys their original hatred of Rome, and denial of its most absurd doctrines. They now learned with delight, that a large portion of Europe had awakened to opinions somewhat similar. They enquired for guides, or else missionaries sought them out. Farel visited them from Geneva: they conceded, in deference to his preaching, whatever little differences existed between their primitive belief and the modern ideas of reform, and thus became united to the great body of protestantism.

This communication and religious alliance with foreigners awakened the zeal of the parliament of Aix, the capital of Provence. That tribunal, in consequence, condemned the leaders to be burned, the population to be banished, and the town of Merindol, their principal hold, to be destroyed. This decree of the year 1540 was not put into effect. The learned Sadolet, who had a diocese in the neighbourhood, and Dubellay, interfered with Francis and stayed the execution. Five years elapsed, and the cardinal de Tournon was in power, a narrow-minded bigot: he pressed the king to, what he considered, the pious and politic act of rooting out heresy; and Francis, in a moment of zeal, despatched the order. The parliament of Aix were not tardy in fulfilling it. The president, the baron d'Oppede, himself undertook to direct the massacre. The baron de la Garde, the adventurer so successful in his mission to Constantinople, commanded the troops chosen to execute d'Oppede's bidding. They marched to the banks of the Durance, and the work of devastation began; the villages were every where set on fire, and the flying population massacred. Merindol was destroyed. Cabrieres made some resistance: but those who combated and

those who yielded met with the same inexorable fate. After the conquest, d'Oppede and his assistant set about murdering the captives. They varied the monotony of their horrid task by strangling some, and shutting up others in barns, which were set fire to and burned. Women were not more spared than men. With forks and halberds all were thrust back into the flames who attempted to escape. Three hundred were hanged, and about twice that number spared to man the galleys. Attempts were made to awaken Francis to a sense of these atrocities, but in vain. The conduct of d'Oppede was approved. De Thou indeed says, that Francis, tormented on his death-bed by the recollection, recommended his successor to examine into the conduct of the president, and de la Garde. It was the subject of a prolonged enquiry in the subsequent reign; but a short imprisonment was the only castigation inflicted on the perpetrators.

About the period of this atrocious massacre, Francis lost his second son, the duke of Orleans, who died of a pestilential fever. He was a youth of gay temper and fascinating manners; consequently, a favourite with his father. It was to him that the duchy of Milan, or the Low Countries, had been promised in dowry with an Austrian princess at the treaty of Crespy. His death almost annulled that treaty. Francis despatched an embassy to Charles on the occasion, making some fresh demands. "If the king will leave me in peace," replied the emperor, then harassed by the league of the protestant princes, "I will leave him so."

In the beginning of the year 1547, Francis received tidings of the death of Henry VIII., for whom he had always entertained a friendship, though the jealous temper of Henry prevented him from returning it. The French king ordered a magnificent mass to be said for the deceased monarch, although he had died out of the pale of the church. He felt Henry's death to be the forerunner of his own, which now advanced rapidly. Francis tried, like Louis XI., to shun his fate, or at

least to dissipate his chagrin, by frequent change of scene, and by the amusement of the chase. Whilst he was returning to St. Germain, his malady suddenly grew worse at Rambouillet, where he died on the 31st day of March, 1547. His last counsel to his son was, to lighten the burden of taxes, and to beware of the ambition of the Guises.

Francis I. was remarkable for a large and noble person. The qualities of his mind corresponded. He was brave, generous, confident, splendid in his tastes, gallant in his pleasures. He was warm hearted; his devotedness as a son, his attachment as a friend, partook of tenderness. The same frank and undissembling temper that bound to him those he loved, made speedy enemies of those whom he disliked. Although prodigal and unfortunate as well as despotic, he was still a popular king; a distinction which he owed to the new spring of loyalty that now actuated men's minds, as well as to his own personal character, of which the failings were as amiable as the virtues. He was a fair type of his age, the ideal of its perfection. He forms the point and marks the epoch in which chivalry and gentility meet, the former subsiding gradually into the latter.

Some writers accuse Francis of being an aristocratic king; whilst others, his own contemporaries, accuse him of sacrificing the aristocracy to favouritism. The fact is, Francis was opposed to an oligarchy, or to a few high, powerful chiefs. Past history, as well as the revolt of Bourbon, gave him a natural dislike to this kind of cabal, for which reason he exiled Montmorency, as eager to grasp at power, and bade his son to beware of the Guises. But the institution of a wide aristocracy was what Francis loved, — the class of noble as distinguished from that of base. It was he who drew the strong line between these castes, less marked before, on account of the gradations which rank and birth filled from the lowest to the highest ranks. But Francis made it a maxim, that all nobles were equal; he called himself "the first gentleman of France;" and whilst his pride

degraded the peasant and artisan far below him, his generosity raised to his own level all those of gentle birth in his dominions. It was owing to this mode of viewing and of classing the French, that the nation soon became divided into two castes; the one apparently that of conquerors, the other that of the conquered. One represents the Franks, the other the Gauls; and erudition lent its weight to sanction, by a false theory, that pernicious division, the result of royal whim and aristocratic arrogance.

The formation of a court, begun by Anne of Britany, but accomplished by Francis, had a great share in producing and strengthening this state of things. Men may form opinions, but it is women who foster them into prejudice. The court became a school of manners, of morals, and political conduct, with immense influence over the nation; but with still greater over the monarch, whose personal character and feelings were speedily merged in that of the little world around him. It soon matured a scheme of moral, as well as of political principle, for itself, such as it found to be convenient. The political code we find in Machiavel; the moral is the worst and most corrupted state of catholicism. Prelates thronged at court. It counted no less than twelve cardinals at the death of Francis, of which number seven were instantly got rid of by his successor. Those, as is related of the jesuits, adopted the habits and morals of their sphere, were amongst the most gallant and corrupted, and accordingly were allowed to direct the conscience of that high-born race whose licentiousness they countenanced and absolved. While the church was chicaning Henry upon his marriages, Francis was in the full career of licentiousness, as an orthodox and most christian king.

To such a court, the very name of reform was distasteful. Not but that reform itself was made subservient, as well as catholicism, to the lusts and passions of mankind, but the passions of Francis had full play under the wing of the orthodox church. His interests, too,

after the concordat had given him the nomination of benefices, agreed with those of that church. And what was more important, the French nobility had the same interests: for the right of election, sanctioned by Calvinism, would take away those rich ecclesiastical offices now reserved exclusively for them. Had Lutheranism made its way into France, as it had into England, it might have been tolerated; but Calvinism roused at once the king, the court, the prelates, nobles, legists. The object of Francis in inviting Melancthon was perhaps to inoculate his subjects with a milder species of heresy, the distemper in one shape or other being unavoidable. But Geneva succeeded in communicating its religious tenets to a great portion of the French people.

Francis has been not unjustly accused of despotic propensities. The royal person and authority acquired a kind of sacro-sanctity in his reign; and yet the general progress of opinion, formed upon a mixture of romance and classic reading, and taking consistency from the facilities which the institution of a court afforded to the noble class for communicating and comparing their peculiar ideas, is more the cause of this than any policy or conduct of the monarch. "Do what we will," said Louis XII., in his declining days, "that big fellow Francis will spoil all." Yet it is difficult to say what he did spoil. He certainly refrained from calling the states together; yet Louis had but once adopted that measure: and Francis certainly did no more than follow the steps of his predecessor in the mode of levying taxes, however he might surpass him in the measure. The people were not discontented with Francis; unfortunately they did not regret the states. It was to sedition, and to a lack of authority, that most of the past divisions and disasters of France were to be ascribed; and the people congratulated themselves upon having a powerful king, who had humbled the chiefs of the aristocracy, and who secured to all an equal distribution of justice. Unfortunately, too, the tide of the time ran towards despotic power in a monarch, and the mon-

arch went with this tide. But I cannot look upon Francis as selfishly or designedly culpable of undermining the liberties of France.

The glory of the monarch's reign is his patronage of letters and of the fine arts. Primaticcio, under whose direction so many noble edifices sprung up in France, was an architect whom his liberality had enticed from Italy; and Léonardo da Vinci, more famed, though less prolific, as a painter, won from the same country by Francis, reflects honour on his patronage and taste. Of literature, unfortunately for the fame of the munificent king, the rude foundations were yet to be laid; and these he applied himself to establish, in endowing colleges, in opening schools, in inviting men of learning to his capital, and rewarding them. As yet there were not materials, there existed not that refinement of tongue, that maturity of taste, requisite for the production of great works. Still Rabelais indulged his coarse wit with impunity, being in this respect more fortunate than Marot. This first of the French poets early espoused the principles of Calvin, and materially helped to disseminate them by his translation of the Psalms, which soon became the favourite chant of the people. To sing them, however, was considered a crime worthy of the stake; and Marot was obliged to save himself from that punishment by voluntary exile.

CHAP. VII.

1547—1559.

HENRY THE SECOND.

HENRY II. was thirty years of age when he ascended the throne. He resembled his father in size and strength, but had not the same graces of person; neither had he the taste, the warmth, the talents, or the amia-

bility of Francis. Still he had commanded armies without disrepute, and was violently attached to those rude and warlike exercises which had been a pastime of his father. Although passionless, he had thought fit to follow the example of Francis in selecting a mistress. This was Diana of Poitiers, soon after created duchess of Valentinois, a dame who was of an age to be his mother, and who really exercised a kind of maternal authority over him. Francis, having observed with pain his son's dullness and uncouthness, had rejoiced at seeing him devote himself to an accomplished woman, who might form his manners and awaken his taste. The charms of Diana, however, were productive of little effect upon Henry, save that of establishing her own influence. She had, even in the lifetime of the late monarch, engaged Henry in a kind of unmeaning rivalry or hostility towards the court, or rather towards the duchess d'Etampes. The existence of these parties has been noticed, and the constable Montmorency owed his long disgrace in part to their intrigues.

The first act of the new king was to summon Montmorency to court and to re-establish him in authority; which, however, he shared with the Guises, and with the maréchal Saint André, the playmate of Henry, and the son of his governor. The duchess d'Etampes was deprived of all the rich possessions that she owed to the favour of the late king; and her husband was even urged to institute a law-suit against her, in which Henry himself had the meanness to appear as a witness. This proceeded from the triumphant rivalry of Diana. The severe spirit of Montmorency showed itself in the execution of de Couey, and of the maréchal du Biez, for not having defended Boulogne with more vigour. Montmorency affected the character of Cato the Censor: — it was the fashion to adopt classic heroes as models; — hence he gave full scope to a rude and merciless temper. Jealous of the influence of prelates and cardinals, he banished them from court, and would willingly have passed the same decree against the ladies who thronged

thither; but Diana of Poitiers was not to be resisted, and the constable, instead of opposing, rather courted her favour. Another point of Montmorency's character, for which, too, he might plead the example of his Roman model, should not be omitted, — this was avarice. He laboured and intrigued to add to his rich domains, and terrified the count de Chateaubriand so as to compel that nobleman to bequeath his possessions to the Montmorencies. Thus, as Francis robbed the unfortunate man of his wife, the minister of Francis robbed him of his heritage. The Guises acted a different part from that of Montmorency: they were, indeed, equally urgent for place and pension, but then their purpose was to lavish, not to hoard. They were generous, and expended largely in gaining friends and partisans; as if, from the commencement, they had been actuated by the ambition of raising their family to the first rank in the state. When these greedy and contending chiefs of parties came to divide at once the gifts of royalty, and the spoil of the people, — Diana of Poitiers, for example, received all the fines paid for the renewal of offices and privileges under the new reign, — men at once perceived and regretted the prudent policy of Francis, who had exiled the constable, and mistrusted the Guises. Acting contrary to his example and advice, and allowing the great aristocratic chiefs to acquire influence and wealth in the administration, instead of changing his ministers, and preventing the undue pre-eminence of any subject, Henry laid the foundation of those party intrigues and civil wars which proved the destruction of his race.

It was the care of the new king to celebrate the obsequies of his predecessor in the most magnificent style. The bishop, who pronounced the funeral oration, used a bold metaphor, which gave occasion to the bigots of the Sorbonne to show their zeal. King Francis, according to the worthy prelate, had been of so holy a life, that his soul had gone straight into paradise without passing through the flames of purgatory. The denial of purgatory was a favourite tenet of the reformers.

The Sorbonne forthwith accused the preacher of heresy: they sent a deputation to St. Germain to make known their complaint to the king. Mendosa, a chief officer of the court, first received it; and, by a facetious speech, saved Henry from an act of injustice. "Calm yourselves, gentlemen," said he to the deputies of the Sorbonne; "if you had known the good king Francis as well as I did, you would have better understood the words of the preacher. Francis was not a man to tarry long any where; and if he did take a turn in purgatory, believe me, the devil himself could not persuade him to make any thing like a sojourn."

The famous duel between Jarnac and Chataigneraie, was the first striking event of Henry's reign. They had both been pages in the court of Francis I. Chataigneraie was a stout youth, given to quarrel, skilled at his weapon, and renowned for his hardihood: he excelled in those rude and martial exercises which the dauphin Henry loved, and was consequently a favourite with him. Jarnac, on the contrary, was a beau, given to gallantry, and fond of dress and elegance; a taste which he indulged to an extent beyond his apparent means. It happened that once in the society of Henry, Chataigneraie, contemning such taste and such a mode of life, asked Jarnac, where he found resources for such expense? Jarnac replied, "that although his father was liberal in his allowances, yet that he obtained an increase of funds through his step-mother, with whom he had made himself a favourite." This passed. But Chataigneraie construed the words of Jarnac into an insinuation that he enjoyed the favour of his step-mother in a criminal sense. He mentioned this to Henry, who repeated it to Diana of Poitiers. The calumny circulated in whispers, and at length reached the ears of Jarnac's father. The son was summoned. In horror he disavowed the crime, and succeeded in exculpating himself. He followed this up by appearing before Francis in the presence of the court, and declaring, that whoever had given birth to such a report, "lied in his throat." The dauphin

took this deadly insult to himself: he, however, could not come forward. The rude Chataigneraie did, and asserted, that he had heard Jarnac boast of having been too intimate with his step-mother. A challenge, of course, was the consequence, and Francis was besought by the antagonists to appoint the field for a combat, the issue of which was to decide the guilt or innocence of Jarnac. Francis, however, forbade the duel, either averse to the absurd principle of judicial combat, or aware how much the imprudence of his son had been the occasion of the quarrel. On Henry's accession Jarnac renewed his challenge and demand. The king consented. The lists were prepared at St. Germain: Henry and his court were witnesses. When the antagonists met in the enclosed field, the slender Jarnac seemed unable to resist the powerful Chataigneraie: he retired before his blows, covering himself with his buckler, until seizing an opportunity he wounded his adversary in the back of the leg, and completely disabled him. The victor, however, spared his adversary. Having in vain asked Chataigneraie to recall the calumnies that he had uttered, Jarnac advanced towards the monarch, and, by the usual courtesy of placing it at the sovereign's disposal, waved his right to his enemy's life. The fierce Chataigneraie scorned to be thus spared: he refused chirurgical aid; even tore his wounds open when they had been dressed, and died. Such was the judicial combat, in which may be said to have originated the modern duel.

The new reign was signalised by a number of new edicts. Robberies and assassinations had become more common: commerce with Italy, and the recent invention of the pistol, that convenient weapon for concealment and menace, contributed to this. Severe laws for seizing murderers were enacted, and the condemned were to be broken on the wheel. Arms were forbidden, except for the military. The jurisdiction of the provost of police was extended, to the dissatisfaction of the parliament, who protested, and could only be brought to register

the law by considering *the wickedness of the age.* A complete poor-law was at the same time enacted for the capital; and sumptuary edicts prohibited the use of silk and velvet, with curious exceptions in favour of different garments and personages. To call together the states was no more the policy of Henry than of Francis; and to impose new taxes was an unpopular commencement of a new reign: nevertheless, the fixed revenue did not suffice; war was becoming daily more expensive. An increase in the current value of coin, the sale of the crown lands, and the demand of a free gift from the good towns, were the first financial measures of Henry.

After his consecration the king proceeded to make the tour of his dominions, visiting his strong places, and reviewing his armies. He had reached Turin, when tidings arrived of a serious insurrection in Angoumois and Saintonge. The *gabelleurs,* or collectors of the salt tax, had commenced their operations in the new reign with increased rigour. The inhabitants of the little town of Lorignac first thought proper to resist: they beat the collectors, and put them to flight. The whole country, on learning this success, fell on the odious *gabelleurs:* the peasants armed and mustered; and the collectors having disappeared, they proceeded to attack the châteaux of the gentry. The insurrection at length reached Bordeaux; and its governor, Monneins, found it necessary to shut himself in Château-trompette, the fortress of the town. Imprudently coming forth soon afterwards to parley with the insurgents, he was slain. The people salted his mangled remains, to mark the cause of their sedition.

The king, on learning these excesses, instantly returned to Lyons, and despatched the constable with an army to crush the insurrection. The Bordelais, who knew his severe temper, were terrified at his approach. They sent a splendid bark for his conveyance, with their keys, in token of submission, and a prayer that the lansquenets, whose violence they dreaded, might not be allowed to enter their walls. "My lansquenets are

loyal servitors of the king," replied Montmorency; "take back your keys; here are those I intend to make use of." He pointed to a formidable train of artillery. The constable's entry was like his answer,—menacing. His first care was to erect gibbets and scaffolds. One hundred citizens were thereon executed. Two peasant leaders died on the rack. The city was to lose its privileges; and its chief magistrates were compelled to disinter, with their nails, the body of Monneins, and transport it for honourable burial to the cathedral. Montmorency's progress through the insurgent provinces was marked by equal severity. Henry made afterwards some compensation for this rigour. Bordeaux recovered its privileges; and the *gabelle* itself was diminished. After this success the court celebrated at Moulins the marriage of Antoine de Bourbon duke de Vendôme with Jane d'Albret, daughter and heiress of the king of Navarre. From this union Henry IV. was destined to spring.

The peace with England and with the emperor had subsisted during the two first years of Henry's reign, notwithstanding the determination of all parties to re-engage in war. But the emperor, though victorious over the protestants, was yet occupied in establishing and confirming the superiority that his arms had acquired. The English flag, waving on the walls of Boulogne, was what chiefly touched and occupied Henry. His views were turned in that direction, rather than towards Germany. The cautious counsels of Montmorency alone kept the young king from open war with England. The policy of France, however, acquired a victory over her enemy at this time, greater than any that her arms could effect. This was the abstraction of Mary, heiress of Scotland, from that country to France, where she was betrothed to Francis, eldest son of Henry II. In the following year the French attacked Boulogne with a large force, while the duke of Somerset, occupied with the discontents and dissensions at home, was unable to despatch an army to its relief. Nor could the emperor be induced to aid or interfere. A wet season, and an inun-

dation, which broke up the camp of the French, and dispersed their forces, alone saved Boulogne for that year; and in the next a treaty was concluded between the crowns, greatly to the advantage of France. Boulogne was surrendered; a certain sum was paid by France, who nevertheless refused to continue the pension that Francis I. had paid to Henry. Scotland was included in the treaty.

Hume remarks, that during these negotiations the emperor observed that the prerogatives of an English king were more extensive than those of a king of France. The emperor, in one respect, spoke truth. The English king had more power over his nobles, to ruin, or cause them to be beheaded. This proceeded from the late civil wars, from the change of dynasty, and from the frequency and danger of treason. Hence the king of England was more dreaded in his court, the etiquette of which was most severe. Vieilleville, sent as an envoy to England by Henry II., observed with wonder that the British monarch was served by lords on the knee. The *debonnaire* Francis had established for nobles much greater equality with the crown. But if the English kings were more powerful judicially than the French, or rather, if they made more use of that authority, the English commons, on the other hand, preserved their principal right and custom of granting taxes; and however base and obsequious were the parliaments of the Tudors, still they did wisely in not risking their existence and influence in a premature struggle with the crown,—such as had proved the ruin of the French states-general,—until the public mind had gathered the information and consistency requisite to support them; or until religious dissent and freedom of opinion had arisen to give a new and stubborn principle of force to the people.

France had now remained for six years at peace with the empire. Charles had well employed this interval of leisure in humbling and subduing the protestant league of German princes. With the aid of Maurice of

Saxony, he had defeated them at the battle of Muhlberg, in 1547. He had been severe, and even unjust, in his treatment of their chiefs, whom he retained prisoners. But his efforts had been zealously and not illiberally directed towards the impracticable task of reconciling and uniting the two hostile sects. Had the debate been even confined to Germany, any arrangement short of toleration would have been impossible. But the rights and claims, the spiritual and temporal interests of the pope, joined with his bad faith and intrigues, might have deterred even the politic and powerful Charles from the attempt. A general council was summoned at Trent. The protestants disowned, and the pontiff dreaded its authority. The appearance of a pestilential disease afforded Paul a pretext to remove it to Bologna. Months passed in discussions. The pope and the emperor could not take the same views. The pope would not yield a jot of his authority; and the emperor, sincerely interested in its consequences, was bent on restoring peace to the church. Enmity broke out between them. The assassination of the pope's nephew Farnese, by some malcontent nobles of Placentia, and the subsequent occupation of that town by the emperor, completed the disgust of Paul, who applied to Henry for his alliance and aid. But the French monarch was not yet prepared; besides, the great age of the pontiff deterred him. The emperor, in the mean time, tried his plan of conciliation. He caused to be drawn up such a series of religious tenets, as he imagined both parties might accept from a love of peace. These, known under the name of *Interim*, were presented to a diet: they were dissatisfactory to both parties; but the emperor insisted on submission to them, until a general council should decide.

Henry II. had hitherto forborne to interfere in these religious quarrels. He wisely determined on first settling his differences with England. Nevertheless his edicts against heretics, and his pursuit of them in his own dominions, manifested his orthodoxy. In

March, 1548, numbers of people from Auvergne were burned in Paris for heresy; and the gorgeous ceremony of Henry's public entry into his capital was terminated, as all festivals and holidays were, by a similar sacrifice. The king had as yet no feeling but contempt for the reformation. None but the lowest and most ignorant of his subjects professed it, at least openly. And the absence from court of that host of prelates, who had urged Francis to persecution, left the monarch for a time happily ignorant, or careless, of a disease, that had already gained the vitals of the kingdom.

The peace between France and England excited, not without reason, the emperor's jealousy and fears. Henry now turned his view to oppose Charles, and many little causes of difference had arisen between them. The affair of Parma was left unsettled by pope Paul, who died in 1550. The new pontiff, Julius III., was embarrassed by the conflicting interests and desires of Francis and of Charles. The Council of Trent was summoned to meet in the following May. But both monarchs and the pontiff forgot alike the peace of the church and the repose of Christendom, in their desire to preserve influence or dominion in one town. Julius, after much hesitation, inclined to the side of the emperor, who flattered him with the idea of making Parma a principality for one of his family. Charles accordingly, with the pope's acquiescence, besieged Farnese in Parma. Henry instantly ordered troops to his aid; and thus the war commenced in 1551, though no military feat signalised the brief campaign.

Henry, now at enmity with pope and emperor, looked round in search of allies. He succeeded in gaining the Swiss, except those of the protestant cantons of Berne and Zurich, and in exciting the Turks against the empire, although this league was of course kept as secret as possible. The protestant princes of Germany were those whose alliance was most important in resisting and diverting the forces of Charles. That party had been humbled, but not destroyed. The emperor, in the

arrogance of victory, had alienated from him Maurice the new elector of Saxony, himself a protestant, although hitherto the chief cause of the downfall of the protestant league. Maurice, having secured from Charles the pre-eminence agreeable to his ambition, which was all the advantage he could hope to gain, now meditated on rallying the vanquished party, in order to put himself at its head, and defy the emperor. In secret the protestant league was renewed; and envoys were sent to Henry to conclude an alliance with him. It is asserted in the memoirs of Vieilleville, that the king and the constable were both averse to this alliance, and wished to retire from the war, until Vieilleville himself spoke, and not only decided the council in favour of the alliance, but proposed the seizure of the three imperial towns of Metz, Toul, and Verdun, agreeably to a suggestion of count Nassau. Vieilleville probably exaggerated his own influence, and miscalculated respecting the backwardness of Henry and Montmorency on this occasion. At any rate, the league was concluded against the emperor, and Maurice of Saxony was declared its chief. The king promised to pay 240,000 crowns at the commencement of the war, and a monthly subsidy afterwards. He was also to attack the Low Countries, and possess himself of the imperial towns above mentioned. This treaty, concluded in October, 1551, was kept secret until the subtile Maurice declared the moment favourable for throwing off the mask.

Henry's resentment against the pope was excessive. He sent Amyot, the translator of Plutarch, to Trent, where the council was to assemble on the 1st of September. Amyot protested in a public speech against the authority of an assembly, which the French prelates were prevented from joining by the war which the pontiff himself had excited. In a speech, of which the aim is not very clear, though the ill temper is evident, Amyot enumerates a long list of papal iniquities and usurpations. He alluded to the pragmatic sanction as still in vigour, declared Henry's contempt of excom-

munication, and entreated the fathers to apply some remedy to this *rising schism*. The French king showed his inveteracy not only in word but in act, by issuing an edict forbidding the despatch of annates, or any tribute money to Rome. These menaces intimidated the pope more than the arms of Henry. Ere the year elapsed, Julius sued for a reconciliation, which took place, and a cessation of hostilities left France in possession of Parma. But lest the partisans of the reformation should be emboldened in the kingdom by this enmity towards the pope, and by the king's league with the German protestants, soon to be made public, he issued about this time the celebrated edict of Chateaubriand against heretics. This, besides recapitulating and sanctioning the old punishments againsts innovators in religion, declares their crime cognisable both by the common courts of law and the ecclesiastical courts. The favourers or concealers of heretics, even those who interceded for them, were declared equally criminal with the principals. Great pains were taken to discover any such leanings among men in office. A system of espionage was ordered for this purpose. A profession of faith was publicly and frequently demanded, and no new functionaries entered on their employments without a certificate of catholicity. The property of all fugitives was declared to be confiscated, as well as all money sent to Geneva. Severe laws were enacted against the press; and that of Lyons was more especially watched and fettered, owing to its vicinity to Switzerland. A Dominican friar, named Orri, was confirmed in the office of grand inquisitor, and he was allowed to appoint subaltern agents throughout the kingdom. This fearful body had *in* France, however, no greater power than that of enquiring and denouncing: condemnations could only be passed in the regular laic or ecclesiastical courts.

The winter of 1551–2 was employed by Henry, as well as by Maurice of Saxony, in secret preparations for attacking the emperor. Henry held a bed of justice, a kind of solemn meeting of the king and court with the

parliament, in February. Notwithstanding the now established despotism of the French king, the necessity was felt of making publicly known new and important measures of policy or finance, to a body that represented, or might affect to represent, the nation. The king in a speech explained the cause and purpose of the war on which he was about to enter; recommended the maintenance of justice and the suppression of heresy; and stated his intention of leaving the queen as regent in his absence,—the first time that Catherine of Medicis appears to have been invested with authority. The constable, who spoke after the king, detailed at greater length all the improvements and policy of the reign: he enumerated the forces then in active service; stated the additional force that would be requisite; and concluded by asking those assembled, as if they were the states-general, what they could do in return, and in support of such wisdom? The cardinal of Bourbon then rose, and announced that the French church had agreed to offer a considerable sum to meet the present necessities of the kingdom. The fact was, that an edict, framed by chancellor Poyet, was issued by Francis I. in 1539, considerably curtailing the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical courts; and the sum now offered by the clergy was the price of the repeal of the obnoxious law. The repeal was promised, but the parliament never would allow it to be registered, or to have force. At present, in answer to the constable's exhortation, the parliament made no offer of their purse; they merely promised obsequiousness and obedience; which were soon put to the test when the financial scheme of the constable was announced. This was the establishment of sixty minor or presidial courts, as they were called, throughout the kingdom, for the hearing and deciding of all suits, in which the value to be recovered did not exceed 500 livres. Divers other vendible offices and courts were also ordained; and thus was created a lasting annual charge upon the state, for the sake of a momentary sum. The parliament were thunderstruck, and made some demur; but, as they

could propose no better plan in the exigencies of the moment, they allowed the new edict to be registered *by express command of the king*, thus recording at the same time their own dissent.

The king summoned his army and noblesse to meet him in March, on the borders of Champagne. At that very period Maurice of Saxony threw off the mask and turned his arms against the emperor, who was reposing in confidence at Inspruck, without any means of defence. Never was a cunning prince so taken in his own toils. Maurice entered Augsburg on the 1st of April, and Inspruck in May, Charles being obliged to make a precipitate retreat to avoid being taken prisoner. Henry, on his part, commenced by making himself master of Toul, which opened its gates. Metz, more important, made more difficulties. The French army was beneath its walls, and the citizens feared alike to submit and to resist. They permitted the constable, however, to enter with a guard of honour. Montmorency, by stratagem, multiplied his guard into a strong division: the burgher sentries, who objected, were pushed aside, and Metz was in the power of the French. All Lorraine was overrun by them, and the young duke of that province was conveyed to Paris to be educated with the dauphin. The Guises were too honourable to allow of the spoliation of their helpless relative. Strasburg, however, warned by the fate of Metz, refused to admit the French troops: tidings arrived, in the mean time, that Maurice, having failed in his project of taking the emperor, had concluded a treaty with him. This was the peace of religion, or of Passau, by which liberty of conscience was secured to the German protestants. Never was nobler aim gained by war: we even pardon, in consideration of that great end, the dissimulation and falsehood of Maurice.

Henry now discovered that he was abandoned by his new allies, who had made their peace with the emperor, without including him or consulting his interests. They perhaps reasoned, that the towns which he had taken

were ample payment for the assistance that he had rendered. The French king soon began to feel himself exposed to the sole fury of the war. The emperor's sister, who governed the Low Countries, sent two armies; one to ravage Picardy, the other Champagne. Instead, however, of defending his subjects, Henry advanced to annoy those of his enemy. He entered the province of Luxembourg, overran it, and took several towns. The emperor, in the mean time, had mustered his forces. An event that spoke well for the character of Charles was, that his captains, and the subjects of his various kingdoms, rallied to his aid instead of deserting him in his distress, and he soon found himself at the head of an army of 60,000 men. With this force he advanced to the Rhine, sedulously endeavouring to conceal the object of his march. But Henry was at no loss to discover this. The possession of the towns lately captured was of the first importance to his kingdom, which they covered on the side of Champagne, a frontier comparatively open without them; and the same reasons which prompted Henry to return and defend them obstinately, must have equally stimulated Charles to recapture them, even if ideas of retaliation and vengeance had not been a sufficient impulse.

To put Metz into a state of defence was now the sole thought of the French. It is singular, that giving battle to the emperor was never once proposed by any officer of that gallant nation. But with all the valour displayed by individuals, nothing could be more timid than the general operations of war in those days; a misfortune doubtless attributable in a great measure to the limited and almost exhausted finances of Henry.

Francis duke of Guise, who had not long succeeded to his father Claude, the first duke, took upon him the command of Metz. A great part of the warlike noblesse of France hastened to serve under his command, and, with 6000 chosen troops, composed the garrison. The exertions of Guise to conciliate the inhabitants of the new conquest, to repair and complete the fortifications,

and to provide ample store of victuals, were strenuous. He gained on this occasion the reputation of a hero, by his activity, a quality not less excellent than courage.

It was the middle of October ere Charles invested Metz, the duke of Alva having the chief command under him. Albert of Brandenburg was in the neighbourhood with a body of mercenary troops. Both parties endeavoured to gain him, but the emperor succeeded. Albert signalised his adhesion by routing a French corps, and taking prisoner the duke of Aumale, the brother of Guise. The defence was not less obstinate. A month elapsed ere any thing like a breach could be effected, but the activity of Guise had raised new fortifications. Not even the presence of the emperor could inspire the audacity requisite for the attack. Winter at length surprised the besiegers, and it came with unusual rigour. The army, encamped under tents, soon suffered from the severity of the weather; and provisions began to grow scarce, the supplies being intercepted by hovering bodies of French cavalry. Early in December a vigorous sortie of the garrison had discomfited the imperialists. The latter, notwithstanding their position as besiegers, confined themselves to the defensive, whilst their enemies were ever ready to rush out to the attack. The difficulty, indeed, was to restrain them, and this impetuosity it was which chiefly employed the ingenuity of Guise. Charles at length tried to undermine the walls and to effect a breach; but the French countermined, and wore out his patience as well as his force. After a sorry Christmas Charles raised the siege, and the glory of Guise was complete. He made a generous use of victory; provided necessaries for the wounded and famished enemy, and contrived to become as popular with the foe as he already was with the French. His troops imitated him. A squadron engaged in pursuit of the flying enemy came up with a band, who asked, simply enough, — what the French wanted? — "We seek to exchange a few blows, to be sure," was the reply. — "We are in no condition for any such amusement,"

rejoined the imperialists: "go away, and let us retire in quiet." The French were generous enough to follow the advice.

Charles shut himself up in Brussels, devoured with mortification, and tormented by the gout. "I see that fortune is a woman," exclaimed he: "she abandons my grey hairs." The emperor's spirit rallied, however, when the season arrived for again entering the field, and he succeeded in taking partial vengeance. He made himself master of Terouanne; and in his anger rased and obliterated it so completely, that not a vestige of it now remains. This was an important loss. Terouanne in the north, and Aix in the south, were considered the bulwarks of the kingdom, or, in the words of Francis I., they were "the pillows on which a king of France might lay his head."* Hesdin, a strong town on the borders of Picardy, was also taken by the emperor. There seems to have been no army to oppose to him; the want of troops being still owing to the low state of the finances. The revenue was not sufficient for the defence of the kingdom. The government feared to increase the taxes, and had recourse to temporary expedients for raising money; while they feared to convoke the states-general, who might have adapted the revenue to the advance and exigencies of the time. Besides the usual expedient of creating new offices, and of rendering the old offices hereditary, for money, a kind of stamp or registry duty was established; and an iniquitous law obliged the subject, in certain cases, to yield up his income to the king in lieu of uncertain and long-dated drafts on the salt fund.

In policy Charles still showed himself to have the advantage. The marriage of Philip, his eldest son, with Mary queen of England, in the commencement of 1554, menaced Henry with a renewal of that league which had crushed his father. The French, however, seemed determined to repair the ill success of the last campaign.

* It is curious here to observe that Napoleon looked on Antwerp, Mayence, and Alessandria, as the bulwarks of *his* empire.

Montmorency, whom the loss of Therouanne had thrown into a fit of sickness, spent the winter in the collection of funds and forces; and Henry, accompanied by the constable and the duke of Guise, entered the Low Countries. They laid siege to Marienburg, and took it: Bovines and Dinant were also won. Philibert Emmanuel prince of Savoy, the son of that duke whom the arms of Francis I. had dispossessed, cannonaded the imperialists, but had no force competent to oppose the French. In those days of narrow resources and unsettled finances, contending powers seldom made a simultaneous effort. Previous bad success, or a sudden impulse, excited one of them to a great exertion, which, until an interval had elapsed, it was impossible to renew. Thus advantage alternated from side to side, and even victory brought no decision. This year the French were in sufficient force for battle, and it was the desire of Guise to fight; but the prudent Montmorency, to whose opinions the king paid great deference, would not admit of risk. The veteran constable began to entertain considerable jealousy of Guise, and of the fame he had acquired by the defence of Metz. Montmorency put forward his nephew Gaspard de Coligny as a competitor of Guise, placing Coligny under the duke's command, to watch and witness his proceedings.

The French invested Renti, a frontier town of Artois, and warmly pressed the siege. Charles himself advanced to throw succours into it, and encamped near the French. The duke of Guise commanded the wing or division next to the emperor. He conceived a plan for drawing on a general action by means of an ambuscade, to which he enticed the enemy's cavalry. A partial engagement ensued, in which Guise was victorious; but as the constable refused to march to his assistance, or make the contest general, the emperor retired to his camp and fortified it. To take Renti in his presence was impracticable, and the siege was therefore abandoned. It was the cause of a lively dispute between Guise and the constable, and their mutual enmity became henceforth de-

clared. In Italy the principal event of the war was the revolt of Sienna in favour of France, and the gallant siege sustained for more than six months by that town against a far superior force. The siege, as recorded by Montluc himself, the commander, is renowned. Montluc was the Gascon whose impatient oddity and eloquence had won Francis I. to give permission for the battle of Cerisoles. He was a brave but reckless and cruel adventurer: he fully displays in his Memoirs that quality of his native province which has become proverbial, viz. gasconading. He was in the end obliged to surrender Sienna. The French indemnified themselves soon afterwards by the conquest of Corsica.

The year 1555 commenced with an attempt at concluding a peace, under the mediation of cardinal Pole. It failed, but not owing to the spirit or inveteracy of the belligerents. As to Charles, he soon after gave the most convincing proofs that ambition and revenge were alike dead within him. He resigned the crown of Spain, with his possessions in Italy and the Low Countries to his son Philip. He endeavoured to unite the empire in the same hands, but his brother Ferdinand, already emperor elect, was resolute in supporting his right to the full dignity. The time chosen for these resignations was towards the close of the year 1555. Ere they took place, the intrigues of the pope, Paul IV., Caraffa by name, awakened those dormant hopes of conquest in Italy which the French never could altogether abandon. The elevation of a new pope was the signal for his relatives to aim at principalities. The nephews of Caraffa might indulge in such aspirations, but the Roman territories had been sufficiently curtailed by the cession of Parma to Farnese. From the emperor, who was hostile to Paul's election, they had nothing to hope. Recourse was therefore had to Henry, and temptations were held out to him to undertake the conquest of Naples, the native country of Caraffa. Henry hesitated, and Montmorency strengthened his prudent resolve not to embroil France again in the unlucky politics of Italy. The Guises were of a dif-

ferent opinion: the duke was eager for fame, for victory, and conquest; his brother the cardinal saw in French success his own elevation to the popedom. Their warlike counsel prevailed against the prudent advice of the constable. A treaty was signed with the pope; but its fulfilment was interrupted by the retirement of Charles, and the wish that he expressed to leave his empire at peace. This led to negotiations, and finally to a truce of five years, highly advantageous to Henry, whom it left in possession of Savoy, as well as of his important conquests in Lorraine.

Notwithstanding the numerous and severe edicts of the king, Calvin was daily gaining disciples in France. Hitherto, fearing to show themselves in the capital, they had propagated their opinions amongst the peasantry and provincial burgesses. An edict was issued in 1552 against the hedge-schools (*écoles buissonnières*) which the reformers were in the custom of holding in the country. The unlimited sale of offices, however, counteracted the severity of Henry's laws. In order to multiply places in the parliament, the judges were to sit but half the year, and to be succeeded by a fresh set altogether. Men of all ranks and opinions had purchased these places of trust. Many who held or favoured reform had thus crept into influence; and the bigotry of the government was neutralised by its misrule and venality. In 1555, a church or congregation of protestants was formed in Paris after the model of Geneva; and several towns, as Meaux, Poitiers, and Angers, followed the example. The new tenets had even reached the court. Montmorency's nephew, Coligny, the admiral, became a convert, and he made use of his office to despatch a protestant colony to Brazil, which failed, however, in the attempt to form a settlement. The court soon became aware of the progress and boldness of the reformers. The cardinal of Lorraine, on enquiring, found that the provincial and inferior courts, chiefly ecclesiastical, were neutralised in their pursuit of heretics by the liberty allowed of appealing to the parliaments or higher courts, who appeared to

be by no means zealous or severe. He therefore prepared an ordonnance, declaring the ecclesiastical judges and inquisitors competent to try and condemn without reference or appeal. This, however, the parliament instantly refused to register. They sent a deputation to present a remonstrance to the king, conceived in the genuine spirit of toleration, declaring, that "the punishment of heretics had increased their number; and that it would be far preferable to imitate the primitive church, who made proselytes and preserved the faith, not by fire and sword, but by the pure doctrine and exemplary lives of the bishops." The king showed himself indignant at their opposition; but the parliament remained unshaken in its determination to resist the establishment of an inquisition.

The truce of five years concluded with Charles was doomed not to last out the first twelve months. The Caraffas renewed their solicitations and their offers to tempt Henry to the conquest of Naples; Guise supported their arguments, and, despite of the constable, war was again resolved on. It was not until the commencement of the following year, 1557, that the duke of Guise could enter Italy at the head of an army. He advanced with it to Rome, bent upon the conquest of Naples. But the pope, on his side, had made no preparations; his contingent of troops was not raised, and Guise's own force was too weak to wrest Naples from the duke of Alva.

Philip II. in the mean time raised an army in the Low Countries to try his first fortune in war. It amounted to 50,000 men; and he showed his sagacity in giving the command to Philibert duke of Savoy. He had influence enough with his spouse, queen Mary of England, to make her join him in the war, which she formally declared, sending a large body of English troops to swell Philip's army. The duke of Savoy opened the campaign by laying siege to St. Quentin, a strong town of considerable importance on the Somme. Coligny, whom his uncle Montmorency always pushed on to rival Guise, flung himself into the town, resolved to rival by

its defence that of Metz. The admiral, however, had not so gallant a garrison under his command, and the duke of Savoy pressed the siege with such activity and skill, that Coligny communicated to the constable, his fears for the result.

Montmorency accordingly advanced to succour the admiral, 18,000 troops being the utmost force that he could muster. The flower of the army was in Italy. The walls of St. Quentin adjoined a deep marsh, on which, of course, the besiegers did not take post. Through the marsh flowed a kind of rivulet; the constable proposed embarking his succours on this stream, which would float them towards the walls; and he calculated, that to gain the town from thence would not be difficult. A difference, however, arose in the council. Every measure was fiercely disputed in this reign of rivalry. The constable intended to lead the whole army to the bank of the marsh, in order to protect the troops destined to enter the place. The maréchal St. André wisely, as it appeared, deprecated the risk, and recommended that a body of infantry only should make the attempt under favour of night. Montmorency, however, led on the whole of his little army, and committed the first blunder in not arriving at the appointed spot until the morning was advanced. However, Dandelot, brother of Coligny, embarked with the succours on the unlucky rivulet, which did not flow near enough to the walls. Most of the troops returned; many were drowned; not more than 500, among whom was Dandelot, gained St. Quentin. The duke of Savoy was not idle in advancing on the small army of the French; while Montmorency, too tardy in retreating, was equally so in attacking. On their passage over a causeway through the marshy grounds, the imperialists might have been assailed with advantage; but the time was lost. The French were surrounded on every side by superior numbers; still they fought with obstinacy: Montmorency and St. André charged the enemy with furious courage; the veteran constable was unhorsed, and taken prisoner;

the count d'Enghien and 600 gentlemen—that name now superseded the designation of *knight*—perished. Some of the highest noblesse of France were made captives.

Philip soon after arrived in his victorious camp, and showed the utmost gratitude towards the duke of Savoy. When the latter sought to kiss the monarch's hand, Philip prevented him, replying, that it was himself who ought to kiss the hands of one that had procured him so glorious a victory. Still he did not pay entire deference to his general's opinion; for when the duke proposed to abandon St. Quentin, and march without delay towards Paris, the monarch hesitated, and shrunk from the bold enterprise. Philip here showed himself a descendant of the cold and cautious house of Austria. St. Quentin, now closely pressed, was taken by assault, notwithstanding all the efforts of Coligny, who was made prisoner while fighting in the breach. The French king, amidst these reverses, exerted himself to rally his affairs, and dispel the panic of his people. Despatches were instantly sent to Italy, recalling the duke of Guise and his army. The *ban* and *arrière ban* were called out, and the fortresses garrisoned. It was the queen, Catherine of Medicis, who showed her activity and presence of mind on this occasion. She summoned the burgesses of Paris, restored confidence to them by her words, and obtained from them the grant of 100,000 crowns; considering that sum necessary for raising and supporting a corps of 10,000 men. The king, at the same time, in his panic, promised his subjects to convoke the states general in the ensuing year. Either the fears of the French were groundless, or their exertions for defence effectual. Philip made no use of his brilliant victory; and his army dispersed in autumn without even capturing another town.

By that time the duke of Guise had returned to Paris. His departure had obliged the pope to become reconciled to Philip, who testified that reverence for the church which education had instilled into him, by exacting no

harsh conditions. It was now winter, a period when hostilities ceased; but the active spirit of Guise could not rest, till he had taken revenge for the defeat of St. Quentin, and he determined to make use of that army of Swiss and Germans which the money of the Parisians had raised. His design was to surprise Calais, and thus not only punish queen Mary for espousing her husband's quarrel, but achieve a feat for which the French would assuredly be grateful, that of driving the English from their last fortress on the Continent. It was customary to weaken the garrison of Calais in the winter months, when the overflowing of the marshes rendered the town approachable only by a single causeway. Despite the warnings of king Philip, and of Wentworth the governor, Calais was left with a garrison of merely 500 men. Guise fell suddenly upon it in January, 1558, took the external forts by assault, and then the citadel: the town itself surrendered after a siege, or rather attack, of eight days.

It now becomes necessary to recur to the history of the reformation, since the reformers, as a party, henceforth began to influence not only the wishes of the nation, and the remonstrances of parliament, but the intrigues of the court itself. The protestants of Paris had taken courage from the successful opposition of the parliament to the edict establishing the independence of ecclesiastical judges. The defeat of St. Quentin, and the distress of the government, still more emboldened them. Henry had ordained public processions in the capital, in order to avert the wrath of Heaven, manifested in the success of the enemy. The protestants derided this mode of propitiating the Deity; and, as if to provoke comparison, celebrated their own simple rites more openly. Four hundred of them met in the Rue St. Jaques to celebrate the communion, and to hear one of their noted preachers. Curiosity collected a crowd of citizens of the old faith in the street. Zeal, by degrees, influenced them: they menaced and besieged the congregation within. The stoutest of the protestants,

however, rushed forth, and the mob fled from them. The women and the timid portion of the congregation remained in the house of assembly. Some had come prepared to pass the night there for concealment, as well as to avoid traversing the city at a late hour. The crowd again collected, and again besieged these unfortunate beings: breaking in upon them at length, they beat and abused them, until a force arrived to take the unfortunate sectaries to prison. The most atrocious calumnies were, as usual, circulated concerning their ceremonies of worship. These were said to be licentious, and even diabolical: all the crimes of the German anabaptists were attributed to them; and some paillasses, which a few of the infirm and aged votaries had brought, being found, were adduced as proofs that the new doctrines were merely a pretext and a cloak for gross corruption of morals.

Among the prisoners government was astonished to find a number of respectable persons,—ladies of the court, and even attendants on the queen; a circumstance that threw some suspicion on Catherine of Medicis. The cardinal of Lorraine was wroth. Anxious to commit the knot of heretics to the flames, he still feared that if he sent them before the parliament many would be acquitted. He therefore employed a certain judicial police officer, technically called a *lieutenant civil*, named Musnier, to try the prisoners summarily, and in the case of an appeal to parliament, to act himself as reporter of the case, which would necessarily tell against the accused. The parliament opposed all these manœuvres of the cardinal, and took the trial of the prisoners into their own hands. The case against them was too clear, and the popular feeling, which now declared itself in the capital against the reformers, too strong to be resisted. The parliament accordingly condemned five of the congregation of protestants to be burned in the Place de Grève. The rest recovered their liberty.

While the duke of Guise was engaged in his expedition against Calais, Henry fulfilled his promise of convoking what he called the states-general, in Paris.

They wanted, nevertheless, the essential characteristic of a national assembly, viz. representation. In lieu of deputies, chosen expressly in the different provinces, and sent with their usual store of grievances and instructions, the mayors and sheriffs of the different great towns were summoned to constitute the commons, or *tiers état*. By another innovation, the parliament of Paris, to whom were joined the presidents of the provincial parliaments, were constituted into a fourth estate, taking rank between the noblesse and the commons. This was artful policy on the part of the cardinal of Lorraine, who had especial reasons for ingratiating himself with the parliament, and winning it over to the views of the court. There was a kind of precedent for the act, as in reality the judicial body had formed a separate class in the assembly of notables convened by Francis I., when the provost of merchants and the sheriffs of Paris alone represented the commons of the kingdom. It is easy to perceive how this artifice of the court undermined the growing power of the parliament, and deprived them for ever of the pretence of representing the body of the people. Had they understood their own interests, or been endowed with sagacity to look into the future, they would have considered it their highest privilege to be confounded with the commons, and they would have defended it with the stubbornness which they could display on more trivial points. But vanity led them astray. It was for their vanity that the court baited the hook, at which they leaped: they considered themselves honoured by being separated from the commons, and brought nearer to the noblesse, with whom they afterwards succeeded in getting themselves confounded. It was not, however, with any profound views of undermining the parliament's authority that they were now nominally elevated in grade; it was for a purpose that will soon appear. The assembly, replying to the king's message by its four estates, thanked him in humble language: the address of the judicial body was conveyed in the most high-flown terms of gratitude; they made a grant of 3,000,000

of crowns, a tax to be raised under the name of a loan. The sum was partitioned among the different communal districts, each mayor and municipality levying their portion. Notwithstanding an express prayer of the commons, the most rich and powerful, otherwise the nobles, found means to be relieved from their share, thus throwing the extraordinary supply, as they did the ordinary *taille*, upon the shoulders of the people.

When this assembly of states-general, as the historians of the time call it, or of notables, as modern writers will have it, was dissolved, the reason for flattering the parliament became obvious. The king held a bed of justice in that court, and proposed an edict for establishing an inquisition, after the manner of Rome; the cardinals of Lorraine, Bourbon, and Châtillon being the inquisitors, with full power to arrest, try, and condemn heretics. The parliament were here taken by surprise. It was ungracious to make resistance after the boon they had received. Nevertheless they did demur, and so far modified the edict, as to abandon ecclesiastics altogether to the jurisdiction of the inquisition, but to reserve still to laymen the ancient and sacred privilege of appeal.

If schism could have been crushed, or put an end to by violence, there was every cause for these severe edicts; for it soon appeared that the most powerful men of the kingdom had embraced the principles of Calvin. Great jealousy rankled in the minds of the princes of the blood, or rather of the house of Bourbon, to which the name was confined. They were kept in a kind of disgrace, without influence, and eclipsed by the Guises. The eldest of the family had become king of Navarre, by right of his wife. He resided in his dominions, and there, in a provincial court, the emissaries of the reformation had insinuated themselves, unwatched, and uncontrolled—for the prelates of the kingdom universally forsook their dioceses for the court—and succeeded in converting the king to the reformed faith. His brother, the prince of Condé, followed the same example. Loyalty or attachment to Henry might have prevented this step;

but of this they were destitute. Jealousy of the duke of Guise, and of the cardinal of Lorraine, was their predominant feeling.

It was incumbent on these princes to repair to the capital in order to attend the marriage of the dauphin, Francis, with Mary, the young queen of Scots, which took place in the spring of 1558. They there gave courage and countenance to the protestants who were emboldened to assemble publicly in the open air, chaunting the psalms of Marot, and indulging in all the enthusiasm of heterodox devotion. A serious tumult occurred on one occasion, and the parliament were obliged to excuse themselves for not enquiring into it by avowing the terror which the menaces of the protestants against informers produced. It was reported to the king, probably by the Guises, that Dandelot, brother of Coligny, was a convert to the new religion. Henry, who esteemed Dandelot, sent for him to Monceaux, a palace belonging to Catherine of Medicis. At supper the monarch took an opportunity to address his guest in a solemn tone of affection, warned him of the accusation, and begged of him at once to deny it, and exculpate himself. Dandelot was moved by the monarch's earnestness and friendship, but nevertheless resolutely avowed his creed, and scrupled not to declare "the sacrifice of the mass an abomination." Henry started up at the word, and thrust Dandelot from him as a viper. He instantly ordered him to prison, and gave his place of colonel-general of the infantry to Montluc. The pope on learning this was delighted at the prospect of so illustrious a person suffering at the stake. But Henry relented, and used every effort to bend Dandelot, who at length consented that mass should be said in his prison. He was immediately liberated and restored to favour.

The family of Guise was now all powerful. The duke, popular for his victories and his liberality, was soon to be still more popular for his orthodoxy. The constable, his nephew Coligny, and the maréchal St. André, were prisoners of Philip, and none at court dared

to rival or oppose the duke of Guise and his brother the cardinal. Such prosperity is apt to bring on the canker of arrogance, which works its ruin. The duke failed in the respect that he had hitherto paid to the duchess of Valentinois. The mistress was not insensible to this, and Guise had soon cause to regret his neglect. He took the command of the army in May, and invested Thionville, a fortress of Luxembourg, which he took. But the French received about the same time a much more serious check. The maréchal de Termes, governor of Calais, had invaded the litoral of Flanders, and had plundered Dunkirk. He thought proper, however, to retreat before the count of Egmont. The delay caused by the passage of the river Aa allowed the Spaniards to come up with him near Gravelines, and to force him to an action. It was fought with valour on both sides, and with uncertain success, until some English vessels of war, cruising off the coast, heard, and made sail towards the quarter whence proceeded the reports of artillery. Perceiving the engagement, the English ascended the river with the tide, and placed themselves so as to cannonade the French. The consequence was, their complete defeat,—a disaster that cut short all the sanguine hopes of conquest entertained by the duke of Guise, and opened the way for peace.

The king regretted Montmorency, *son bon compere*, "his good gossip," as he used to call him. The arrogance of Guise, the imperiousness of the cardinal of Lorraine disgusted him; and the duchess of Valentinois now took care to aggravate his dislike. Henry kept up a familiar correspondence with the constable, and informed him of passing events, not disdaining to act as a kind of spy, betraying the petty intrigues and views of the Guises. The constable panted for his liberty, and resolved to make use of his influence to obtain it. He was liberated on parole. There was a cessation of hostilities; and commissioners met at Cercamp to arrange the conditions of a treaty. The Spaniards presumed on Montmorency's influence, united with his desire to be free.

Their demands were exorbitant; and the constable returned to prison. Not long after, however, we find him with the court at Beauvais, celebrating the marriage of one of his sons with the grand-daughter of the duchess of Valentinois. Negotiations for peace were not relaxed. The ransom of the constable was fixed at 200,000 crowns; but it was to be diminished by one half, if peace should be concluded through his medium, a stipulation that leaves somewhat like a stain on Montmorency's honour.

By the peace of Château Cambresis, signed April, 1559, France ceded all her conquests and claims in Italy and Savoy. She restored Luxembourg and the Charolois. In return she kept Metz, Toul, and Verdun, and what was more important than all, Calais; the restitution of which, when Philip no longer insisted on, Elizabeth, the new queen of England, was in no state to make good. This peace, inveterately opposed by the Guises, and cried down by their partisans, is generally condemned by historians, who have taken up the cry as injurious to France. Her interests, say they, were sacrificed to the freedom of her superannuated constable. In this respect they exaggerate, wilfully putting Calais out of consideration, which was ceded more by Philip than by the English. The treaty was sealed as usual by marriages.

Emmanuel Philibert, the hero of St. Quentin, and now the restored duke of Savoy, espoused the king's sister. His daughter Elizabeth, once the destined bride of the infant of Spain, was given to that prince's father, Philip; and Claude, another princess, was betrothed to the duke of Lorraine.

Had the life and reign of Henry II., destined to be of not much longer duration, closed here, he would have left the character of a severe but not a perfidious prince. As yet, the noble sentiments, the chivalric feeling of good faith, that Francis I. had professed and rendered popular, prevailed. Neither Henry in all his weakness, nor his ministers in all their ambition and mutual quarrels, had forgotten the plain laws of manly uprightness

and honour. These were destined soon to be forgotten. To be brave, candid, generous, loyal, soon ceased to be the mode. The volumes of chivalry were soon thrown aside as puerile, and Machiavel was studied in their place. Another ideal of perfection, and another model of conduct, were established. By it dissimulation, cunning, and fraud, provided they proved successful, were declared to be the most estimable qualities. Superiority of intellect was measured by depth of guile. All moral considerations were of course set aside. The end was in every case found to justify the means, however base; and, as a natural consequence of such views, the end that each politician proposed to attain by these extreme measures soon dwindled down into mere self-interest.

No where, in fact, can be pointed out so sudden and complete a change of national character as that which took place in France at this epoch. The contemporaries of Francis I. seem separated by centuries from the men who figured in the days of his grandson: even the same men present different characters in the two epochs. The Guise of Henry II.'s reign is not the Guise of Charles IX. What effected this sad change? Religion, catholicism, it must be answered: — the established faith of Rome, and its supporters, who finding that the common weapons of reason and justice would not suffice to crush reform, and that the common principles of religion and morality could not be brought to bear against it, perverted both, more, if possible, than they had already perverted them in the iniquitous contest.

The act of Henry II., now about to be narrated, is the first flagrant outrage against honour, the first open demonstration of Machiavelism, and may well mark the point of juncture between the two epochs, — the substitution of the law of fraud for the law of honour. The treaty between Philip and Henry was not concluded without a solemn agreement between the monarchs, sufficiently unnecessary, indeed, considering their character, for extirpating heresy. The great obstacle in Paris was the apathy or leniency of the parliament. Many of the

members were supposed to favour the reformation; but how were they to be discovered? The cardinal of Lorraine conceived a plan for this purpose. It by no means bespoke a want of cunning. The only wonder is, how he could persuade the king to become the instrument of such baseness. But sacerdotal reasoning in such cases is conclusive.

Henry, accompanied by the great officers of his court, proceeded unexpectedly to the hall of parliament: he took his seat, to the great astonishment of the members, and formed what he called *a bed of justice:* he then, in a tone of the utmost kindness and condescension, announced to them that he came merely to ask the advice of the sage members of his parliament on an important matter, viz. a due treatment of heresy. He urged all present to offer their several opinions. They unsuspectingly obeyed him. Those of the highest consideration, the presidents Harlai, Seguier, and De Thou, boldly and generously avowed their sentiments in favour of toleration; professing at the same time their attachment to the faith of their fathers, but declaring that they deemed it equally impolitic and unjust to punish the errors of thought or the misgivings of conscience. The zealots, on the other hand, recommended persecution, and cried out for blood. Two counsellors, however, excited most attention, by openly avowing their predilection for the new opinions. These were Louis Faur and Anne Dubourg. The latter complained, that whilst men were dragged to the stake for simply praying to their God, the orthodox were busied in blasphemy, perjury, debauch, and adultery. The last words, though levelled at the cardinal, were instantly referred to the king. His anger instantly overcame his dissimulation. He ordered Montgomery, captain of his guards, to arrest the two counsellors and drag them to prison. The parliament saw the trap which had been laid for them, and trembled. Faur and Dubourg were both hanged. Several judges were arrested, while others took flight.

A very short time after this a festival took place in

honour of the late royal marriages. A tournament was Henry's chosen pastime; and one was prepared in the Rue St. Antoine on this occasion. The king and the duke of Guise were among those who held the lists against all comers. They were victorious. The monarch especially had signalised his address, and no new adventurer appeared. Henry, however, wished for more of the game, and accordingly ordered Montgomery to break a lance with him. The stout captain obeyed. The king and he ran together: their lances shivered in the shock, when a splinter penetrating Henry's vizor, inflicted a deep wound over his left eye. He was immediately carried to his palace, where he lingered for twelve days, and expired on the 10th of July, 1559. Montgomery, the innocent cause of the disaster, thought it prudent to fly. He was taken some years after, and executed by the cruel Catherine of Medicis, in most unjust retribution.

The character of Henry was neither so distinctly pronounced nor so peculiar as to require a delineation separate from his reign. He wanted the splendid qualities of his parent, nor did he compensate for that want by more solid qualities. In the bustle, the feats, and the reverses of the reign of Francis, we are apt to overlook his policy, or forget that he had any, until the reign of his son places in strong contrast his prudence in maintaining the ascendancy over his ministers, and keeping himself superior to court intrigue. Henry allowed himself to be so overcome and controlled by favouritism and arrogance, that we can never look for causes in his individual will or views. These were lost in the stronger wills of the chiefs who surrounded him. He was more of a bigot than Francis, as Philip was more of a bigot than Charles, and for the same reason. The priesthood that had their part in the education of the princes inspired them from the cradle with an abhorrence for heretics, which could not have been acquired by their sires without being tempered with the experience of manhood. Yet Henry did not deal generally

in bloodshed like his father. The population of a whole province was not extirpated in his reign. Even to his last mean and culpable deceit, the bed of justice, he was absolutely forced by the cardinal of Lorraine, "who held to him such language," said Vieilleville, "such comminations of the ire of God, that he esteemed himself already damned if he forbore to go."

CHAP. VIII.

1559—1574.

FRANCIS THE SECOND AND CHARLES THE NINTH.

If the late king, of a character naturally masculine, was overborne and nullified by the nobles his contemporaries, who divided the court, it is not to be supposed that his son, Francis II., a youth of sixteen, could really hold much authority. The thoughts of the young monarch were all centred in his lovely queen, Mary of Scotland, who, fond of gaiety and pleasure, naturally transferred to her uncles of Guise and Lorraine the influence pertaining to her new dignity: they, in fact, became complete masters of king and kingdom. Montmorency, received coldly, was allowed once more to retire to Chantilly. The duchess of Valentinois was also exiled; her jewels and estates were confiscated in favour of Catherine of Medicis, who, contented with this triumph over her rival, did not yet dare to dispute the ascendancy of Guise. The neglect of the court that had weighed on the princes of the blood, the king of Navarre and his brother of Condé, was now aggravated by insult. The family were, however, of a tranquil, generous temper, brave indeed, but very unfit for conspiracies and for court intrigue. The king of Navarre was apathetic and fond of ease; the prince of Condé was given to pleasure. The nephews of Montmorency, — Coligny the

admiral, and Dandelot, — were not of this pacific disposition: they were indignant at their uncle's disgrace, and discontented with their own. Communicating their griefs to the Bourbons, they stirred the dormant passions of those princes, and imparted to them their own restless and ambitious spirit. Condé, in particular, was won by Coligny, a man of a bold and imposing character. They consulted how best they might humble the Guises, and dispossess them of power: the malcontents were all inclined to the reformation, except Montmorency. They resolved to take advantage of this important circumstance, and place themselves at the head of a religious faction hostile to the court: this was unfortunate for France. The cause of civil liberty had been betrayed and lost in the reigns of Charles V. and VI. by the princes of the blood, who put themselves at the head of the popular parties, and confounded the interests of the people with their own. Now religious freedom was doomed to perish in the same manner. Instead of being allowed to make gradual progress in the public mind till it had assumed force to command respect and conquer intolerance, it was prematurely excited to revolt by the intrigues of discontented princes. A conspiracy against royalty became the first act of protestantism in France; and thus hundreds of loyal subjects and rational minds were alienated from it, and their dislike was strengthened by prejudice. The court, with some reason, henceforth declared against it an eternal war.

Many of the noblesse had already joined the party of Coligny and of Condé, though the king of Navarre and the constable hesitated and held back. La Rochefoucault, Jarnac, and the vidame de Chartres declared for them. An atrocious impertinence on the part of the cardinal of Lorraine, opportunely occurring, swelled this band of foes to the Guises. Tormented by demands, some for debts due, and some for places promised, the all-powerful prelate in a fit of spleen published a proclamation by sound of trumpet, ordering all petitioners, of whatever rank, to quit Fontainebleau, where the court

then was, without delay, and this under pain of being hanged. The cardinal, perhaps, meant to be facetious; for the court instantly became a desert. The host of noble suitors, proud though mendicant, could not forgive the threat, and many joined the discontented.

The party had numerous meetings in the château of Vendôme, and in other places. La Renaudie, a gentleman of Périgord, and an agent of Coligny, was employed by him to be the ostensible leader. A meeting was secretly convened at Nantes, where the protestants and enemies of Guise united to the number of 600, and took counsel together. It was agreed to attack Blois, where the king then was, obtain possession of his person, and get rid of the odious Guises. Amongst such a host of conspirators secrecy was almost impossible: the duke received warning of the plot, and removed the court to the castle of Amboise. The cardinal of Lorraine was terrified: he proposed to summon the *ban* and *arrière-ban*, and gather an army against the rebels. All the anxiety of Guise, on the contrary, was, that his enemies should show themselves; and for that purpose he affected confidence. Coligny and Condé both repaired to Amboise, where Guise received them without betraying the least mark of suspicion, and he appointed them to different posts of defence about the castle; each, however, watched by his own trusty partisans. The rising had been appointed for the 15th of March: it took place on the 16th: the baron of Castelnau seizing the castle of Noizé, not far from Amboise. La Renaudie was marching to join him: they hoped to surprise the court; when on a sudden the royal troops sent by Guise made their appearance, attacked la Renaudie, slew him, and besieged Noizé.

An amnesty was now published in the hope of allaying the insurrection: but, as if in contempt of it, the château of Amboise was attacked on that very night. All the vigilance and valour of Guise were required to repel the rebels. By secret information he had time to prepare for them, and they were routed. The am-

nesty was revoked, and no mercy was shown to the captives. Twelve hundred of them were hanged, or otherwise despatched: even Castelnau, who had surrendered on the faith of the duke of Nemours, was executed in the presence of the court. In the confessions forced from many by the torture, none of the real chiefs of the conspiracy were mentioned except the prince of Condé. History is even in doubt to decide if those chiefs were concerned in the attack: the protestant party will not admit that they by this rash and unwarrantable act produced the civil war. Condé was brought to trial in presence of the court: he disdained to defend himself but as a knight. "Let my accuser appear," said he, regarding Guise, "and I will prove upon him, in single combat, that he is the traitor, not I, and that he is the true enemy of the king and of the monarchy." Guise rose to reply, to this challenge. "I can no longer suffer these dark suspicions to weigh upon so valiant a prince; I myself will be his second in the combat against whoever accuses him." Most of those present were as perplexed, as no doubt the reader is, to comprehend this conduct in the duke of Guise. Some called it chivalric generosity, others the perfection of guile.

In the trouble excited by the conspiracy, the young king, for the first time, manifested an opinion of his own. He was shocked at finding himself the object of hatred, and he began to mistrust the Guises. The queen-mother, Catherine, after the example of her son, also took courage; and the chancellor Olivier, as well as Vieilleville and other courtiers, joined her party. Hence arose the first amnesty,—a concession on the part of the Guises which was recompensed by the duke's appointment as lieutenant-general of the kingdom. The executions which followed, especially that of Castelnau, which the court witnessed, shocked the princesses (the cardinal Lorraine hoped that the sight of heretic blood would have had an opposite effect), and they, with the young queen Mary, flung themselves into the scale of mercy. Guise was unable to resist this influence: he

saw that the prince of Condé must in consequence be released, and he sought to take to himself full credit for a generosity that was forced upon him. Here then Catherine of Medicis, for the first time, appears as the leader of a party. Notwithstanding our prejudices against her, she appears also, on this first occasion, as the supporter of mercy.

The continued mistrust and independence of the Guises shown on the part of the queen-mother and the young king produced an assembly of notables, summoned soon afterwards at Fontainebleau to take the affairs of the kingdom into consideration. In it the protestant leaders, even prelates, spoke openly the apology for reformation; and Coligny demanded tolerance for the sectarians, relying upon the neutrality of the court. Guise could no longer command his temper, as he did at Amboise: mutual recrimination and menaces were heard in the assembly of peace. Both parties struggled in their discourses to convince the monarch of the justice and expediency of their counsels; but the weakness and indecision of the court was at the same time seen by both; and an appeal of equal earnestness was made by them to the people. The protestants continually cried out for the states-general, and a national council. And now the cardinal of Lorraine forgot his nature so far as to join in the cry, and make the same demand. The independent attitude of the queen rather forced the Guises to strengthen themselves by popularity.

Such appear the true reasons why the states-general were summoned to meet at Orleans, in October, 1560. Historians in general perceive in them merely a snare to catch the protestant chiefs. They served that purpose indeed, but they had been already summoned ere Condé, just released, could have recommenced his intrigues. The arrogance and boldness of the protestants, and of Coligny, in the assembly of notables at Fontainebleau, were revolting to Catherine and Francis. Between August, when that assembly was held, and October, the period for the assembling of the states, the Guises

had completely won the court to themselves, and regained their influence. The prince of Condé attempted during that interval to seize Lyons, and convert it into a strong hold of rebellion. He failed, however; and his traitorous enterprise became thoroughly known at court. Notwithstanding this, the brothers of Bourbon, the king of Navarre, and the prince, were induced to join the assembly of the states. Though full of mistrust, they still ventured on the secret favour or neutrality of Catherine, who joined in enticing them to come. They were ill received by the king. Catherine was troubled, and shed tears on beholding them, knowing them to be victims betrayed by their confidence in her. The king's mind had been filled with the bitterest calumnies against them: he accused Condé of having attempted his life, and ended by committing that prince to prison. The king of Navarre instantly complained, and expostulated with the queen-mother; but she could not now retract the consent she had given, or unbend the mind of the young monarch. Condé was tried by a commission, and refusing to answer, was condemned to death. The day was appointed for the execution, and Catherine of Medicis betrayed to all who approached the agony and misgivings of her mind. Historians will maintain that this sensibility on the part of Catherine was affected: they think, with Davila, that it would be a dishonour, or at least an inconsistency, in the queen, that she should have felt a particle of the natural tenderness of her sex, even in the commencement of her political career. I beg to think that she was sincere in *now* wishing to save the life of Condé; and fortune placed this in her power. The young king was stricken with sudden illness, arising, it is supposed, from the formation of an abscess in his head. The supreme authority rested with the queen-mother. The Guises urged her to execute the sentence upon Condé; but she hesitated, and resolved to save him. She determined, however, to turn her mercy to advantage; summoning the king of Navarre, she offered to spare the life of his brother, provided

he signed an agreement renouncing all claim to the regency in case of the young king's death. Navarre signed; and Francis II. expired on the 5th of December, 1560.

Charles IX., a boy ten years of age, now succeeded his brother Francis. Catherine of Medicis, according to her promise, liberated the prince of Condé; and as the king of Navarre, according to his promise, supported the queen's pretensions, she took upon her the office of regent. The Guises, though shorn of their paramount influence, and mortified by the escape of Condé, were still formidable as a party. To make the balance more even, Catherine recalled to court the veteran constable, Montmorency. Nothing could be more successful or happy than the policy of this princess hitherto, nor was it as yet made subservient to her own cruel measures: her interest as well as that of the kingdom recommended to her a middle course, between the extremes of contending parties. This was a task that required infinite prudence, and led to the necessary vices of dissimulation and guile: these, combined with the measures of blood in which she was afterwards induced to join, have rendered her in the eyes of posterity a very monster of cruelty and deceit. Her enemies have exaggerated their representations from hate; her friend and secretary, Davila, has done the same from a preposterous desire to raise the intellectual character of his mistress at the expense of her moral worth. Whatever differences there may be on this point, there can be none as to the talents of Catherine: her choice of followers is an ample proof of them. One of the first uses she made of her incipient influence was to raise de l'Hôpital to the chancellorship, against the wishes of Guise; and when we record that this upright man was now her friend and counsellor, the fact goes far to prove, that she was not at this early stage such a demon of guile as she has been represented.

There is no task more impracticable than that of holding the balance between two zealous and active parties. The states now assembled leaned against the Guises. The king of Navarre proposed, as a measure

of offence, to extinguish the debts of the crown, now considerable, by resuming the grants of the two last reigns. This blow was chiefly aimed at the Guises, but it also reached the maréchal St. André and the constable. Catherine in vain endeavoured to stifle the imprudent proposal. Montmorency was avaricious: he felt himself in the same predicament with Guise, in being forced to render up his acquisitions. Sympathy united them. The constable abandoned the party of his nephews, and also that of the reformation to which he ever had a repugnance; and thus was formed, of the constable, the maréchal, and Guise, a triumvirate that disquieted Catherine and menaced the protestants. The queen immediately determined to strengthen the protestant side; and an edict appeared, granting them some slight favour, and substituting the pain of banishment for that of death in common cases of heresy. The Guises, on their part, having secured the constable, and opened a communication with Spain, resolved no longer to trouble themselves with petty court intrigue, but leaving Catherine to pursue her own plans, waited till some flagrant blunder of hers would afford them an opportunity to interfere with advantage. The queen took the quiet and apparent content of the Guises to be real. She proposed an accommodation between the duke and Condé, which took place in form, the princes separating as enemies no less bitter than before. The queen then flattered herself that all went on admirably. In concert with her counsellor, de l'Hôpital, she pursued, and sincerely pursued, the beneficent work of establishing religious peace and toleration. The divines of both persuasions met at Poissy. The cardinal of Lorraine and Theodore Beza disputed, and, as usual, separated each more bigoted than he was when he came. A deputation from the different parliaments met at the same time at St. Germain. Under the influence of the chancellor they approved of toleration; and, strengthened by their approval, the government issued the famous edict of January, 1562, granting tolerance to the Hu-

guenots, and allowing them to assemble *outside* the walls of towns.

This was the signal for the Guises. They departed from the capital in indignation, and retired to Lorraine, that they might not be witnesses of the triumph of heresy. While Catherine had been engaged in her philanthropic endeavours at toleration, they were not idly employed in winning over to their side the weak-minded king of Navarre. Catherine, on other occasions, had courted him, and long held him by the charms of one of her maids of honour, a culpable mode of influence much practised by the queen-mother. At the present conjuncture she could not have suspected that Anthony of Bourbon, unfixed as he was in his religious opinions, could desert his brother, his family, and the Huguenot party, with which he had so long acted. But the promise of their restoring that part of Navarre beyond the Pyrenees, which Spain had conquered, was held out by the Guises and Philip; and the king was dupe enough to trust to it.

The two parties were by this time excited throughout France to the highest pitch of mutual exasperation. Already, numbers of petty insurrections, skirmishes, murders,—the usual preludes to civil war,—had occurred. The court having retired to the queen's country-house of Monceaux, the duke of Guise determined to try the pulse of the Parisian population; and for that purpose set out thither. During his journey an event occurred, which fell like a spark upon the combustible minds of the Huguenots, and served as a signal for war. In passing through the little town of Vassy, on the borders of Champagne, at an hour when the protestants were assembled, outside the walls according to the edict, in prayer, the duke felt especially indignant: his suite partook of his resentment, and began to insult the crowd. From insults, blows ensued. The duke ran to quell or to see the disturbance, and was struck in the cheek. The sight of his blood called forth fresh anger on the part of his followers: troops joined him; and a mas-

sacre of the unfortunate inhabitants of Vassy took place, which the duke was either unable or unwilling to stop. The protestants were aroused by accounts of this event. They began, however, by sending a deputation to the queen. The king of Navarre, in his stupid zeal, insulted them, and excused the massacre. Theodore Beza answered him, with a happy allocution, "that the protestants, if they could not defend themselves, had, at least, the strength to endure; and that religious liberty was an anvil which had worn out many hammers."

The entry of the duke of Guise excited the greatest enthusiasm among the Parisians. They declared with one voice against the Huguenots; and he was now assured that catholic opinion would find a fortress in the capital. Their demonstrations of zeal were so extreme, that Catherine of Medicis thought it best to retire to Melun, and thence to Fontainebleau. But even here she was not safe. The triumvirate marched to Fontainebleau, and brought back the king and the queen-mother to Paris. The prince of Condé at the news took possession of Orleans, summoned his partisans, and made that town the head-quarters of the Huguenots, as the capital was of the catholics. In the south and west of France, the Huguenots had the advantage: these provinces declared for them. The superiority of the catholics consisted in the possession of the king, the capital, and the greater part of the regular troops. There was still a hesitation in commencing the war. Catherine, who clung tenaciously to power, and who, in order to retain it, now joined, or affected to join, the triumvirate, tried to negotiate with Condé. The prince was weak enough to listen to her; but his followers would not allow of his becoming a dupe. Dandelot uttered a piece of advice, that might be true of any quarrels save religious disputes. "We can never be friends with the catholics," said he, "till we fight our quarrel out." Unhappily, it was not by combat, but by massacre, that the war commenced. The Huguenots took Beaugenci, and committed every atrocity: their enemies retaliated; and

hus, a religious war at once assumed all that savage character which usually distinguishes it. At the same time the prince of Condé, to counterbalance the aid which Philip of Spain now openly held out to the Guises, concluded a treaty with queen Elizabeth, to whom he delivered Havre de Grace in return for a corps of 6000 men.

The catholics opened the campaign in the autumn with the siege of Rouen, where Montgomeri commanded. The chiefs would not lose sight of Catherine and the king, who accordingly accompanied them; and the queen, surrounded by gaiety and beauty, showed every sign of contentment and zealous orthodoxy. The town was vigorously attacked and gallantly defended. Many women of the protestants were slain. In one of the assaults, Anthony of Bourbon, king of Navarre, received a wound which proved mortal. This weak prince, slain in the ranks of the catholics, left an infant son, who, under the care of his mother, Jeanne d'Albret, was reared to be the support and glory of the protestant cause. This infant was the future Henry IV. Rouen at length surrendered. Montgomeri escaped; but ten of the principal huguenot inhabitants were executed. Condé used reprisals at Orleans; and thus the parties warred, each spilling blood upon scaffolds of its own erection.

The prince, however, having received a reinforcement of 7000 Germans under his brother Dandelot, at length marched out of Orleans. He first insulted the capital, burning the villages in its vicinity, and then turned towards Normandy, in order to draw near to the English. He was followed by the constable; and the first battle was fought on the 19th of December, at Dreux. The principal force of Condé was in cavalry, his infantry being chiefly Germans,—a circumstance which indicates that it was among the middling class, or the wealthy burgesses, that the soldiers of the reformation were recruited. Vieilleville corroborates this. The royal army was composed chiefly of infantry, in number about 18,000, and in this respect superior to the enemy. The

two armies contemplated each other for a considerable time, till at last Condé, with the courage of a captain, but with none of the method or foresight of the general, fell upon the main body under the constable. He routed it after an obstinate struggle, in which the Swiss, of whom it was chiefly composed, rallied at each opportunity. The constable, however, was taken, and led off the field,—Guise, who was on the right, never moving to his succour. The duke waited until the huguenots were completely wearied and exhausted with the resistance of the Swiss, and then advanced with his fresh division to restore the action. This he effected with the utmost success. The undisciplined cavalry of Condé were in total disorder; Guise swept them before him, and took the prince prisoner. The admiral Coligny made good his retreat, however, with the Germans, and rallied the fugitives. The maréchal St. André, in endeavouring to harass him, was taken and slain. The singularity of the battle of Dreux was, that each of the two generals became prisoner to the opposite party. Guise gained both ways; not less by the removal of the constable, whose rank entitled him always to the superior command, than by the captivity of Condé. This prince was treated with the utmost generosity by his rival: they shared the same tent, the same bed; and while Condé remained wakeful from the strangeness of his position, Guise, he declared, enjoyed the most profound sleep. There were, indeed, heroic traits about the duke of Guise, that mark him to have been naturally of a generous and noble disposition. It appears that, especially when in arms and away from his brother, he could shake off the hard-heartedness, the guile, and even the ambition, which in the cabinet rose to stifle every better quality. But we are now engaged with scenes and men that would demand, if full justice were to be done to them, the amplest page of history. Guise followed up his victories by laying siege to Orleans. While he was engaged in reducing this strong hold of his enemies a huguenot gentleman named Poltrot

treacherously shot the duke with his pistol. He lingered nine days, and expired with exemplary fortitude and piety. He was a brave and great man, with such power of nerve and concentrated pride, that, notwithstanding his equivocal rank in France, the stern constable himself and the princes of the blood quailed before him. His virtues were his own; his vices those of his party. The death and captivity of the chiefs on both sides, Coligny excepted, necessarily brought on an accommodation. Peace was declared; and the edict of Amboise, issued in March, 1563, granted full liberty of worship to the protestants within the towns of which they were in possession up to that day. Thus ended the first religious war, which, in addition to the events we have recorded, deluged the entire south of France with the blood of the contending parties.

The conclusion of peace restored Catherine of Medicis to the supreme authority. In order to exercise it under a less invidious title than that of regent, the parliament of Rouen, by her order, declared king Charles, now thirteen years of age, to have attained his majority. Reared by the crafty and prudent Catherine, he early acquired, in perfection, the power of dissimulation; but he never imbibed that utter indifference to both religious parties which distinguished his mother, and which allowed her to consult her own interest or the public good in leaguing with either, or in balancing and alternating between them. On the contrary, Charles, thrown among the catholic party at an age when a bias is soon and strongly gained, amidst the bustle of war and of a camp, which pleased him, soon imbibed the zeal of the partisans of Guise. He had the sagacity to perceive that orthodoxy was much more favourable than the doctrines of the reformers to his kingly authority. A worse effect on his character was produced by sights of cruelty; for at this tender age he beheld the atrocities practised on the protestants at the siege of Rouen, and during the campaign. The young king was thus led to adopt, in his

sober counsels, the sanguinary measures that the heat of war engendered but could not excuse.

This decision of her son in favour of the catholics had a very great influence in finally drawing over Catherine to that party. Other causes also impelled her: the catholics were without leaders; there was a place, therefore, for her at their head: and, in a little time, the pope and Philip of Spain both declared so strongly against the protestants, that the queen was driven, from a principle of self-preservation, to adopt the winning side. This abandonment of her impartiality, Catherine, however, delayed as long as it was in her power. After the conclusion of peace, she endeavoured to soothe Condé, and win him over to moderate demands; thus preparing the way for an accommodation. Condé was a man of pleasure, prone to indolence, in which he gladly indulged whenever an interval occurred in war or in business. Catherine held out to him her usual bait, the charms of her maids of honour; and Condé loitered, like another Rinaldo, in the toils of this Armida, until the ministers of the reformed religion recalled him from licentiousness and compelled him to marry. These stern disciplinarians were said to have hanged one of their flock for the crime of adultery. This alone was enough to alienate the courtiers of France and the demoiselles of Catherine.

The edict of Amboise had not long been issued, when a modification of it was found necessary. That edict had allowed to the protestants the celebration of their worship in towns which they possessed. It was found that several bishops and clergy, construing its terms in their favour, had established the new rites in their cathedrals and churches. This would have outraged the pope and the catholic princes. Indeed, notwithstanding the clamours of the protestants, so great a concession was not to be expected; and accordingly the privilege was withdrawn. The ancient cathedrals were not allowed to become temples of the reformed religion. New differences consequently arose: the Guises accused Coligny of

instigating the murder of the duke; and the admiral arrived to answer the charge with his suite, which almost amounted to an army. Either Catherine or Charles himself took this opportunity of increasing the usual royal guard of 100 Swiss, into upwards of 1000 men. The old constable came to instigate the Parisians, and a tumult ensued, in which lives were lost.

In the following year, 1564, the young king resolved on making a progress through his dominions, especially in the south. The cardinal of Lorraine went to Rome at the same time, and Charles was met at Bayonne by his sister, the queen of Spain, and the duke of Alva. This meeting, in which the minister of Philip communicated the views of his master, completed in the mind of Charles his hatred of the reformation, and instructed him concerning the means by which it might be eventually crushed. The edict of Roussillon*, which appeared while the court was in the south, imposed new restrictions on the toleration granted by that of Amboise; so that, as Pasquier observes, "edicts took more from the protestants in peace than force could take from them in war." The huguenots, therefore, despairing of impartiality or justice from the court, began already to look forward to another struggle.

During this state of things an assembly of notables was held at Moulins. Catherine, who, notwithstanding her sagacity, very often mistook the form for the reality, insisted on a public reconciliation between the Guises and Coligny. It took place at her bidding; the cardinal and the admiral embraced; but young Henry duke of Guise showed even there, by his cold and mistrustful demeanour, that his first ideas were those of vengeance and hatred. It was in this assembly, that the chancellor de l'Hôpital proposed his improvements in the administration of justice. Whilst all others, prince, noble, and functionary, were absorbed in the spirit of religious party, de l'Hôpital alone, professing at once catholicism

* It was this edict which ordered that the year should commence on the 1st of January, instead of, as heretofore, commencing at Easter.

and tolerance, but unable to obtain attention, followed the unambitious track of judicial amelioration.

Religious troubles, similar to those of France, began to agitate the Low Countries. Philip, resolving to present a high example to France, established the inquisition among his Belgic subjects in all its vigour; and as this only made matters worse, the duke of Alva was despatched to those provinces with an army in 1567. The French court affected to fear this force, and raised an army as if against it. When the duke of Alva, however, appeared on the frontiers of France, he was treated as a friend; and the huguenots immediately perceived that the troops were levied, not for the defence of the kingdom, but for the oppression of themselves. They accordingly leagued and armed in secret, determined to meet the perfidy of the court with correspondent guile. Their consultations ended in a project to surprise the court at Monceaux, and get possession of the king. It failed, however, as the similar plot had previously failed at Amboise, through the postponement of a single day. The queen had warning; the Swiss were summoned; and the court retired to Meaux, and from thence to Paris, pursued and menaced by the disappointed Condé.

Thus commenced the second religious war, in September, 1567. "Catherine," says Henault, "caused the first civil strife by favouring the reformers, and the second by irritating them." She was now at least zealously hostile to them. She had been provoked by the numerous calumnies and libels which the huguenots directed against her, and she cordially joined in the opinions of her young son, and of his and her ally, Philip. She no longer sought an habitual adviser in the moderate de l'Hôpital, who was of opinion that the reformers were unfairly treated. The chancellor always asserted their loyalty. After their attempt to surprise Meaux, the queen asked de l'Hôpital — "Would he now answer that their sole aim was to serve the king?" — "Yes,

madam," replied he, "if you assure me that they will be treated with good faith."

Condé took up his quarters at St. Denis. The catholics under Montmorency were posted at La Chapelle, a village that is now the suburb of Paris on that side. The constable wished as usual to procrastinate, but the impatience of the Parisians forced him to attack. The battle was fought in the plain of St. Denis: it began with a cannonade; but the huguenots, to avoid the destructive effects of the artillery, charged the Parisians furiously, and routed them. Their flight left the constable unsupported; Condé turned on him his victorious cavalry, and Montmorency defended his position, when Stuart, the captain of the Scotch company in the service of the huguenots, coming up close to the constable, against whom he had cause of hate, fired his pistol and shot him. A furious and confused *mêlée*, somewhat like an Homeric fight, immediately took place around the dead body of the constable — the huguenots with savage zeal seeking to carry it off. They were beaten, however, and driven from the field in the attempt. Thus fell, in civil strife, and engaged against his own nephews, the veteran warrior of France. His years, his hardihood, and his name, have rendered him deservedly celebrated. His defence of Provence against Charles V. is particularly memorable. By French historians he is characterised in terms of the highest encomium: they commend his sternness, his courage, his orthodoxy, and forget that avarice and selfishness sullied and almost neutralised each of his virtues.

The constable's death was a victory to Condé, who was able to offer battle to the catholics on the following day. He denied having lost that of St. Denis. Young Charles, who was witness to a dispute on this point, asked Vieilleville — "who had won the battle?" — "Neither catholic nor protestant," responded the maréchal; "it is the king of Spain who has won by our discord." The huguenots had neither pay nor provisions, and were therefore obliged to quit the vicinage of Paris,

directing their course across Lorraine towards the frontier of Germany, as they expected a body of auxiliaries from that country. They were pursued, but not much harassed in their retreat. Catherine endeavoured incessantly to decoy them into negotiations, the department of warfare which she felt herself most competent to direct. She restrained the warlike disposition of the king; arguing with truth, that, from the violent animosities of the time, the leaders of armies marched to meet a certain fate, either in battle or at the hand of the assassin. The king's brother, Henry duke of Anjou, was created lieutenant-general. Catherine, who knew the weak and yielding nature of her second son, would gladly have made him the hero of the catholic party in preference to young Guise, whose name she dreaded.

After much privation, during a march in winter, the huguenots fell in with their German auxiliaries; and as they now outnumbered their enemies, they marched back into France. They laid siege to Chartres, which, being stoutly defended, kept the army fixed before it, and gave the queen full opportunity for employing her favourite efforts at negotiation. Coligny saw plainly the perfidy of these overtures; but their followers and supporters, anxious for peace, obliged them to listen to terms. A treaty was concluded at Longjumeau, in March, called the *Lame Peace*, as well from its infirm and uncertain nature, as from the accidental lameness of its two negotiators. Its terms were a medium between the edict of Amboise and that of Roussillon.

The peace was, as Coligny already saw, but a trap to ensnare the huguenot chiefs as soon as their army should be disbanded. They were on their guard, however, keeping away from the court, and far apart from each other, that at least one might escape in case of treason. Notwithstanding this resolve, Condé and the admiral found it necessary to consult together, and for this purpose met at Noyers, a little town in Burgundy. The court was soon informed of it; and orders were instantly despatched to Tavannes, and to the other governors in the south, to

arrest them. Tavannes was not vigilant in the execution of their commands, and Condé and Coligny escaped. By this order, the queen had thrown off the mask; though, indeed, without such an indication, the executions and murders throughout the south sufficiently proved that the *lame peace* was never intended to be observed by the catholics. Through inconceivable difficulties, the two chiefs traversed the country, and reached Rochelle in safety, where the protestants now found themselves obliged, for the third time, to raise the standard of revolt. Troops did not fail to join them from all quarters; but the most welcome aid came from Bearn, the queen of Navarre and her young son arriving at the head of 3000 of their subjects.

This young prince, destined to run so glorious a career, was born at Pau, in 1553. His father was Anthony of Bourbon, king of Navarre, slain at the siege of Rouen. Chroniclers never forget to relate, that his mother sung at the birth, and that old Henri d'Albret, the infant's grandfather, held up the child in delight, rubbing its lips with garlic, and moistening them with wine. Excepting a short period spent at court, the boy lived the rude and healthy life of a mountaineer, and imbibed from his mother the rigid principles of the reformation. It was in September, 1568, that he accompanied her to Rochelle.

As if to add to the horrors of civil war, winter was always chosen as the period of operations. The duke of Anjou was at the head of the catholic army, with the maréchal Tavannes for his adviser. When Condé and the huguenots approached, the cold was so extreme as to chill the zeal of both armies. They found it impossible to engage in battle. Mutual pillage, and cruelties too horrid in many instances for the pen to record, were the only feats of the soldiery. During the inaction that ensued (for the winter grew to that extreme rigour which is seldom known even in France), the numbers of the huguenots' army dispersed: the burgesses and volunteers, of whom it was principally composed, each betook himself to his own home. The catholic troops, on the

contrary, were soldiers by profession, paid and disciplined. Hence, in the spring, Condé was far inferior in force to his enemies, before whom he was obliged to retire towards Rochelle. In his retreat, the prince, having crossed the Charente, took post at Jarnac, determined to keep the river between himself and the enemy, and to dispute his passage. The duke of Anjou, however, succeeded, by rapid marches and feigned attacks, in deceiving the vigilance of the prince; and, passing the Charente on the morning of the 16th of March, attacked with 26,000 men the huguenots, who did not exceed 15,000. At the first intelligence that the duke had passed the river, the retreat was ordered. Condé was already a league distant, with half the army: Coligny was following, but waited too long for some stray companies of horse. The consequence was, that he was attacked by an overwhelming force of cavalry. The battle here began between the chiefs on either side, who singled each other out. Dandelot seized Monsalez, the leader of the catholics, knocked his visor up, and shot him. La Noue, a huguenot captain, the celebrated writer of the "Discours," was taken, and, as no quarter was given, escaped with difficulty. Condé, in the mean time, hearing the sounds of an action already engaged, checked the retreat, and, leaving his infantry to follow, galloped with his cavalry to support the admiral. But by this time the whole army of the catholics had come up; and the protestants had no alternative but to die valiantly. The prince of Condé, inspired with this sentiment, was preparing for a charge, when a kick from the horse of one of his officers broke his leg. He stifled the exclamation of pain, charged with his troops, and was overthrown in the struggle. He continued in the midst of the enemy, defending himself, though fallen, until a captain of the duke of Anjou's guard shot him with a pistol.

The protestants lost the battle and their chief. Their infantry, which Condé had left behind, and which had not fought, now covered the retreat, and served to rally the party. The loss of the prince threatened to prove

more serious than that of the army, the independent captains and nobles refusing to obey Coligny. The courage of Jeanne d'Albret, queen of Navarre, opportunely contributed to the relief of her party. She brought them funds; stimulated them by the example of a woman's intrepidity; and leading her son, prince Henry, accompanied by his cousin the young prince of Condé, amidst the huguenot chiefs, she exclaimed, "Despair not: behold the new chief that Heaven has sent to command you!" They caught her enthusiasm, and acknowledged Henry of Bourbon as their new leader.

An army of Germans soon after entered France under the duke of Deux-Ponts. This called the attention of the catholics, and divided their forces. King Charles was already jealous of his brother, the duke of Anjou, for the laurels he was gaining, and of the favour shown to him by the queen-mother. The cardinal flattered these feelings of jealousy; and one half of the court was thus employed in counteracting the exertions of the other. The duke of Anjou, in consequence, was unable to follow up his victory; nor was the march of the Germans arrested. In a sharp combat that took place at La Roche-Abeille, the huguenots had the advantage. They were exasperated by the knowledge that a body of papal troops had come to swell the royalist army. Their fury and eagerness to welcome the papists made them victorious, and at the same time merciless: they gave the Italians no quarter. It was here that young Henry of Navarre was first allowed to mingle in the combat. After this check, the catholics determined on a singular measure,—that of throwing strong garrisons into the neighbouring towns, and disbanding the rest of the army, with orders to re-assemble in October. It was now but July. Want of funds might have been one of their motives; but the principal reason was, perhaps, to avoid another battle until the German auxiliaries had worn out the resources of the huguenots and their own patience, and had followed the ordinary custom of such troops, by returning homewards.

These measures of the court obliged Coligny to undertake a siege, now almost the only mode of carrying on the war. He was averse to it, and would rather have made a bold march toward the capital; but the noblesse of the province compelled him to lay siege to Poitiers. The young duke of Guise had thrown himself into the town, and the besiegers soon found that he had determined to emulate his father in the celebrated defence of Metz. An epidemic disorder began to ravage the huguenot army; and even the life of the admiral, the last resource of his party (Dandelot having been dead some months), was threatened by it. He was at length forced to raise the siege.

The army of the duke of Anjou re-assembled at the appointed time. It was fresh, healthy, and superior in numbers to that of the huguenots. The purpose of Coligny was to avoid a battle; but, as had been foreseen by their enemies, the German troops had by this time grown weary of the service, and, with a view of concluding the war, or of finding a pretext to desert it, they demanded to be led to battle. The catholics were pressing upon them, and there had been a sharp skirmish on the preceding night. In obedience to the will of his army, Coligny turned and faced the enemy in the plains of Montcontour. An action took place; a confused and headlong fight, in which all the duties of a general, save that of valour, were set aside and forgotten. There was a single combat between Coligny and a German leader called the Rheingraf. He shot away part of the jaw of the admiral, who slew his adversary. Such was the exasperation, that the servants and suttlers of the huguenot camp mingled in the ranks, or rather in the press, and fought. The catholics were too strong and too disciplined for their enemies. They defeated them, drove them from the field, and, remembering Roche-Abeille, slaughtered without offering quarter.

This was the fourth battle lost by the protestants. It shook their constancy and courage; and at St. Jean d'Angeli, where the wreck of the army rallied, thoughts

were universally entertained of at length submitting to the authority of the king, and to the yoke of the catholics. The indomitable spirit of Coligny, however, roused his party. Wounded as he was, he could still enumerate the resources that remained: the cavalry, that had escaped with little loss from Montcontour; the army with which Montgomeri had just reduced Bearn; and also the aid of foreign powers; above all, of England, with whose support Rochelle, the principal strong-hold of the huguenots, was impregnable. The eloquence of Coligny was convincing; his fortitude shamed away all thoughts of submission; and, retreating farther into the south, the protestants showed themselves as formidable in defeat as in victory.

The royalists did not pursue their advantage with vigour. The new success of the duke of Anjou rekindled the jealousy of Charles. The monarch joined the army, set aside the duke of Anjou from the command, and sent his partisan Tavannes to the insignificant government of Boulogne. Instead of pursuing the admiral, the catholics weakened themselves through the very fault which he had committed in the preceding summer, by engaging their force in sieges. They invested St. Jean d'Angeli. The petty fortress held out for the space of two months; and, instead of being able to reduce Rochelle, la Noue, the huguenot governor of that town, was able to make conquests and gain partial victories. La Noue, on one of these occasions, sustained the loss of one arm, which obliged him to use an iron hook for holding his bridle, and he thence acquired the name of *Bras de Fer*.

From the small results of this year's campaign, in which he had gained two decisive victories without in any sensible degree checking the progress of the reformation, Charles began to perceive that war was ineffectual, and that it was a vain hope to reduce the religious malcontents by force. To pardon, or grant them tolerance, was foreign to his envious and malicious temper, as well as repugnant to his bigot principles. The only

means left were to recur to the favourite policy of the queen-mother, that of negotiating with the huguenots, concluding a treaty, affecting reconciliation, and artfully getting possession of the persons of all the chiefs. Davila says that Catherine impressed this advice upon her son at this juncture, on perceiving that the Montmorency family were wavering, and already meditating a desertion of the party of the court for that of the admiral. Most historians assign to Charles another counsellor in these matters: this was an Italian, Alberto Gondi, count de Retz, whom the queen had placed about the person of the young monarch, and who failed not to instil into him those Machiavelian principles, that were considered in his country as including the only honourable maxims, the only rules of action worthy of the statesman. In this he most probably went beyond the wishes of Catherine; for Gondi cordially joined the king in his jealousies and suspicions against his mother.

Events soon occurred to render the crooked policy meditated by Charles more necessary. Cossé-Brissac, commanding the catholics, was beaten by Coligny, who, avoiding the fatal measure of a siege, advanced upon the capital. The veteran admiral was by this time weary of the war; he was sick of shedding the blood of his fellow-countrymen; his avowed object was peace—a treaty in which the rights of the French protestants should be guarantied, and which, allowing them to join their arms to those of their catholic brethren, might open an opportunity for gaining victories over a foreign enemy, instead of those which now, whatever side claimed or won them, were equally disastrous to France. An envoy from the court found Coligny disposed to entertain these sentiments. The terms he had to offer were favourable in the highest degree. However the suspicions of the admiral might be awakened by this facility of concession, he had no pretext for showing them. If Catherine of Medicis had recurred to her former plan of entrapping the chiefs of the huguenots, who now remained of them but he? It was selfishness, then, and

personal timidity, in Coligny to object on this account. The treaty was, in consequence, concluded. Amnesty and liberty of conscience were granted to the protestants: their worship was allowed in all towns held by them during the war, and, at any rate, in two towns of each province; and they were allowed to preserve and garrison four strong places in the kingdom, viz. Rochelle, Montauban, Cognac, and La Charité, as guaranties that these conditions would be observed. Such was the treaty signed in August, 1570. It is impossible to suppose that Charles could have granted, as his mother advised, such terms, especially the last of them, without some secret determinations of vengeance. After the victories of the preceding year,—the late defeat of Brissac, which had led to negotiations, might have been itself an artifice,—such concessions would be utterly inconsistent with the known sagacity of those who made them, unless we suppose that their intention was to cover the perfidious designs that were approaching their maturity. Anquetil asserts that the admiral manifested entire confidence; and adds, that he, immediately after the peace, retired with the queen and the prince of Navarre to Rochelle. He could not have given a stronger proof of mistrust.

The object of the court was not peace, but vengeance. To draw the protestant leaders to the capital became the principal effort of policy. To entice the queen of Navarre an ample pretext was found. It was proposed that her son Henry should espouse Margaret, the king's sister, which marriage would in itself be a bond of union between the parties. To Coligny Charles held out what he knew to be the darling project of the admiral,—a war against Spain, undertaken by the French of both religions, for the purpose of annexing the ancient fief of Flanders to the crown. The queen of Navarre was mistrustful: she abhorred taking a wife for her son from amidst so corrupt a court. Still she hesitated to refuse so high an offer: she came to negotiate. Catherine of Medicis lavished all her smiles, made use of all her

cajoleries, in vain. Her power of address and artifice failed before the stern and conscientious doubts of Jeanne of Navarre. This princess died after a short illness, and the objections raised by her ceased to be urged. The protestant writers do not doubt that she was poisoned; no proof, however, corroborates the suspicion.

Coligny in the past troublesome times had appeared as the valiant though often unsuccessful soldier, full of resources, and never more formidable than when overwhelmed by defeat or surprise. Still we might have mistaken him for a zealot, for one of those fiery spirits born but to breathe the atmosphere of civil strife, had not his later days shown him the patriot, sacrificing self-interest to the public weal, forgetting his just suspicions in his love of peace, and only meditating how the disgrace of intestine war might be obliterated by the glory of foreign conquests. There is even an admixture of romance in his life. A noble lady of Savoy became enamoured of his heroism, and escaped to espouse him. By this she lost her rich possessions, which were confiscated. Neither she nor Coligny showed regret at the loss. He gave his daughter at the same time to Teligny, a gallant young soldier, who had fought under his own eyes, but who possessed neither birth nor fortune. Full of his schemes of wresting Flanders from Philip II., Coligny appeared at court, and was received by Charles as a son might receive a forgiving parent: —"My father," said the perfidious young monarch, in a tone that did not betray the real irony of the expression, "we hold you now, and you shall not escape us."

Coligny was in fact treated as the father of the court: the king consulted him on every occasion, while young Guise, his uncle of Lorraine, and their party, concealed their disgrace, and affected the deepest resentment against Charles. So perfect was the dissimulation, and so profoundly played was the game, that the catholic historians, who wish to excuse or palliate the atrocity of Charles,

have room to pretend that he was really won over by the noble bearing and the patriotic views of Coligny; and that the Guises and Catherine, afraid of the admiral's influence, forced the young monarch into the conspiracy against him. There is an absurdity in the supposition, whether it be regarded generally, or examined in detail. There could be no object in enticing Coligny to court except that act of vengeance through which his enemies hoped "by one fell swoop" to get rid of him and his principal adherents. The Spanish war, which served as a pretext, could never have been sincerely meditated, and was evidently a rumour, intended to last for a short time, until the catastrophe should occur, by which it was to be dissipated.

The pope, however, was really deceived by the amicable bearing of Charles towards the huguenots, by the inexplicable lenity of the treaty, and above all, by the marriage. The legate expostulated with the French king, who was embarrassed how to frame a reply, not daring to betray his intentions. "I wish to Heaven, cardinal, that I could tell you all," were the words of Charles; "but you and the pope shall soon know how beneficial this marriage shall prove to the interests of religion. Take my word for it, in a little time the holy father shall have reason to praise my designs, my piety, and my zeal in behalf of the faith."

The ill-omened marriage at length took place. Coligny went not without warnings: he pretended to have good reasons for his confidence, and accused the mistrustful of folly. "I would rather save myself with the fools," said Langoiran, "than die with such sage people." The admiral remained, and was present at the wedding of the prince of Navarre with the princess Margaret on the 17th of August. Festivities of the utmost splendour followed the ceremony. Catherine of Medicis showed her taste and ingenuity in them at the very time that a murder was planning. On the 21st, as the admiral was proceeding home on foot from the Louvre, an arquebuss, discharged at him from a window,

wounded him dangerously in two places. He was nevertheless able to reach his residence. It was evident who was the immediate instigator of the murder. The assassin was known to be Maurevel, one who had been before employed to shoot Mouy, a huguenot general. The shot was fired from the house of one attached to the duke of Guise.

When the king was informed of the event, he exclaimed, "Shall I never be left in repose?" He paid no attention to the duke of Guise, with whom he was at the moment playing, and who had no doubt by his orders planned the mode of putting to death the admiral. Charles had hoped that the murder of Coligny would have roused the huguenots to take instant vengeance upon Guise, and that in the tumult his troops, aided by the Parisians, would soon master them in the moment of insurrection, to which he could easily affix the appearance of treason. Thus the king would be rid of the importunate chiefs of both parties. But the admiral wounded and not killed was the worst that could happen. His indignant followers might retire with him, and recommence the civil war. This was to be prevented at all hazards. Charles undertook to soothe Coligny: he visited him, expressed the utmost resentment at the murderous attempt, and vowed to take vengeance on the perpetrators when he should discover them. "To discover them cannot be difficult," replied the admiral, coolly.

Whatever had been the plans of the king and of Catherine, it was evident that something had gone wrong in them. Their aim had been to get rid of their enemies, yet escape the odium. It now became necessary to brave the odium, and execute the essential part of the project, if they would not run the risk of frustrating the object of all their negotiations, concessions, and treachery. In a consultation, therefore, held by Charles with his brother the duke of Anjou, the Guises, and Catherine, a general massacre of the huguenots was decided on. The queen-mother was for slaying merely the seven or eight

leading chiefs; but Charles, who had hitherto hesitated, at once became furious with the foretaste of blood, and ordered an indiscriminate slaughter. This was but too congenial with the sanguinary spirit of the Guises, who undertook the execution. Tavannes was charged to muster the city guards on the appointed night, and instruct them in the task and the order of slaughter.

The eve of St. Bartholomew, the 24th of August, was the night appointed. The prince of Navarre and the prince of Condé were the only protestants to be spared: yet Charles, on observing the young count de la Rochefoucault, whom he liked, about to leave the Louvre, laid his hand upon him, and besought him to stay that night at the palace. The count refused: the king entreated; but fearing to awaken suspicion, he abandoned his friend to his fate. All was wakeful that night in the Louvre. The orders were issued; and Charles, restless and agitated, watched the hours in horrible suspense. The queen-mother and the duke of Anjou were with him. The latter has left a record of the moment, and describes the stunning effect of the first pistol shot that broke the stillness of the night. Guise and his band of cut-throats rushed out at the sound towards their appointed prey, whilst the tocsin of St. Germain l'Auxerrois called the catholic citizens to the massacre of their brethren.

Guise soon reached the admiral's abode, and forced his way in, crying, "To death! to death!" but feared himself to face Coligny. It was Bême, a German follower of the duke's, who rushed up stairs, and entering an apartment, beheld a venerable man engaged in prayer. "Is't thou who art Coligny?" asked the assassin. "It is I," replied the admiral: "young man respect my grey hairs." Bême, for answer, plunged his sword into the admiral's body, and exclaimed through the window, "He is done for." "Let us see, though," cried the sanguinary Guise, and the bleeding corpse of Coligny was flung down to him: he wiped the face with his handkerchief, in order to recognise the features, and then was satisfied.

The same scene was repeated in every street, almost in every house. The catholics, with the sign of the cross in their caps, or the image of the Virgin round their necks, to distinguish them, pursued all those that bore not these symbols of the assassin, and murdered them without pity. Women were not spared, nor youth; and the child that could wield a mallet, it is recorded, was directed to dash out the brains of the infants of heretics. What is surprising, the victims made no resistance! The most valiant captains bared their throats to the knife; they would not derogate, at such a moment, from their character of martyrs. Most were murdered as they slept, or when just starting from their beds. Teligny, to whom the admiral had given his daughter, was shot on the tiles of his house. One old noble, Caumont de la Force, who had himself received his death-wound, saw one of his sons slain: ere his strength left him, he had presence of mind to fling himself upon his other son, still sleeping, and thus concealed and preserved him with a parent's dead body. A huguenot, pursued by a captain of the king's guard, in the very palace, rushed towards the chamber of the king of Navarre, forced it open, and flung himself into the bed for safety. Charles's sister, Margaret, the bride of the late spousals, was in it alone. She sprung up in affright, the huguenot still clinging to her for safety. The captain arrived with his drawn sword, but was so struck with the ludicrous position of the princess and the terrified huguenot, that he burst into laughter, and was induced to spare his victim.

No allowable space would suffice for the records of such indiscriminate massacre. Charles, by his missives, ordered the same scene to be renewed in every town throughout his dominions. And the principal cities but too zealously responded. Fifty thousand protestants are said to have fallen victims of the monarch's order. A few commanders refused. The viscount d'Orthe wrote back to the court, "that he commanded soldiers, not assassins." And even the public executioner of a cer-

tain town, when a dagger was put into his hands, flung it away, and declared himself above the crime. The family of the Montmorency, though catholics, showed their abhorrence of these acts, and had the courage to take down the body of the admiral, which had been hung to the common gibbet, and to give it burial at Chantilly. Charles IX. had not failed to visit it, while yet suspended. His followers complained of the odour. "The body of a dead enemy cannot smell otherwise than sweet," was his reply. And yet this is the monarch whom some historians uphold to have been sincere in his demonstrations of friendship to Coligny; and who, say they, was but subsequently induced, by an intrigue of Catherine and of Guise, to consent to the massacre. He now avowed that all was committed by his orders; and even held a bed of justice in his parliament for the very purpose. The trembling judges, with de Thou, their president, could not but applaud his zeal. As for de l'Hôpital, who had long been banished from court, and who had abandoned the friendship of Catherine since she had joined the Guises, he expected not to be spared, and ordered his domestics to throw open the gates. They disobeyed, and the murderers were unable to reach him. But de l'Hôpital did not long survive to deplore the miseries of his country. His words were, "After such horrors, I do not wish to live." The joy of the pope, on the other hand, and of Philip of Spain, knew no bounds. The supreme pontiff went in state to his cathedral, and returned public thanks to Heaven for this signal *mercy*.

Charles had spared his sister's husband, the young king of Navarre, and his companion the prince of Condé. It was only at the price of being converted. Death or the mass was the alternative offered to them; and both, after some resistance, yielded in appearance. On the other hand, mere abhorrence of the massacre caused many catholic gentlemen to turn huguenots. Amongst these was Henry de la Tour d'Auvergne, viscount de Turenne. After all, the crime, from which so much was expected, produced neither peace nor advan-

tage. The huguenots were, indeed, paralysed by the blow; but the catholics were no less stupified by remorse and shame. King Charles himself seemed stricken already by avenging fate. He was nervous, and agitated. The blood he had spilled seemed ever to stream before his eyes. A continual fever took possession of him, and henceforth never ceased to consume him. The chiefs were equally languid, equally disunited. The huguenots had time to rally, and to prepare for defence. Rochelle and Montauban shut their gates. Charles in his blindness sent la Noue, the huguenot, to Rochelle; he became its commander. The town was at length besieged, and thousands of the catholics fell before it; among them, not a few of the murderers who assisted in the massacre on St. Bartholomew's eve. At length Charles, unable to conquer, and incompetent to carry on war with vigour, granted the huguenots a peace. Rochelle and Montauban preserved the freedom of their religion; and Charles had the pain of perceiving that his grand and sweeping crime had but enfeebled the catholic party, instead of ensuring its triumph.

Catherine, in the mean time, had the address to procure the crown of Poland for the son of her predilection, Henry duke of Anjou. She had lavished her wealth upon the electors for this purpose. No sooner was the point gained than she regretted it. The health of Charles was now manifestly on the decline, and Catherine would fain have retained Henry; but the jealousy of the king forbade. After conducting the duke on his way to Poland the court returned to St. Germain, and Charles sunk, without hope or consolation, on his couch of sickness. Even here he was not allowed to repose. The young king of Navarre formed a project of escape with the prince of Condé. The duc d'Alençon, youngest brother of the king, joined in it. A body of horse were to wait in the forest of St. Germain for the princes, and protect them in their flight. The vigilance of the queen-mother discovered the enterprise, which, for her own purposes, she magnified into a serious plot. Charles

was informed that a huguenot army was coming to surprise him, and he was obliged to be removed into a litter, in order to escape. "This is too much," said he: "could they not have let me die in peace."

Condé was the only prince that succeeded in making his escape. The king of Navarre and the duc d'Alençon were imprisoned. The former, accused of conspiring against the king's life, defended himself with magnanimity, and asked, was it a crime, if he, a king, sought to free himself from durance? This young prince, or monarch, had already succeeded by his address, his frankness, and high character, in rallying to his interests the most honourable of the noblesse, who dreaded at once the perfidious Catherine and her children; who had renounced their good opinion of young Guise after the day of St. Bartholomew; and who, at the same time professing catholicism, were averse to huguenot principles and zeal. This party, called the *Politiques*, professed to follow the middle or neutral course, which at one time had been that of Catherine of Medicis; but she had long since deserted it, and had joined in all the sanguinary and extreme measures of her son and of the Guises. Hence she was especially odious to the new and moderate party of the *Politiques*, among whom the family of Montmorency held the lead. Catherine feared their interference at the moment of the king's death, whilst his successor was absent in a remote kingdom; and she swelled the project of the princes' escape into a serious conspiracy, in order to be mistress of those whom she feared. Lamole and Coconas, both confidants of the princes, were executed for favouring their escape. The marshals of Cossé and Montmorency were sent to the Bastile. In this state of the court Charles IX. expired on the 30th of May, 1574, after having nominated the queen-mother to be regent during his successor's absence.

The character of Charles is graven in the events of his reign. He was a cruel and perfidious monster; and although a great portion of the burden of his crime;

must fall on the religion which prompted and absolved, nay, nominally hallowed them, yet to have been instrumental in perpetrating such atrocities is sufficient to damn him. One should think there was no need for this severity of language; one might suppose that the mere facts, the massacres of the time, would sufficiently provoke the judgment of every reader. But the memory of Charles IX. has never wanted defenders. Brantôme describes him as a pattern of amiability and virtue. Catholic writers have not ceased to vaunt and to excuse him; and even a modern historian, Anquetil, begs us "to excuse his extreme vivacity," and informs us that "his good qualities were far more in number than his bad ones."

CHAP. IX.

1574—1589.

HENRY THE THIRD.

THE career of the new king, while duke of Anjou, had been glorious. Raised to the command of armies at the age of fifteen, he displayed extreme courage as well as generalship. He had defeated the veteran leader of the protestants at Jarnac and at Montcontour; and the fame of his exploits had contributed to place him on the elective throne of Poland, which he now occupied. Auguring from his past life, a brilliant epoch might be anticipated; and yet we enter upon the most contemptible reign, perhaps, in the annals of France. Notwithstanding the valour of Henry, occasionally directed by a mind sagacious enough when awakened, there was a weakness, a fatuity about him, that looked like a curse, for it was unaccountable. He seemed to have faculties, but no spirit to direct them. Pleasure

was with him the sole end of existence. He inherited from his mother a complete indifference to any principle or party. But this want of motive, which she amply supplied by profound and active selfishness, in him became apathy, combined with a distaste for aught save sensual and frivolous enjoyment. The maternal feeling that led the astute Catherine to centre her affection in this weak and infatuated son must have wrought for her much of the pain and mortification that her perfidy deserved.

Henry was obliged to run away by stealth from his Polish subjects. When overtaken by one of the nobles of that kingdom, the monarch, instead of pleading his natural anxiety to visit France and secure his inheritance, excused himself by drawing forth the portrait of his mistress, the princess of Condé, and declared that it was love which hastened his return. At Vienna, however, Henry forgot both crown and mistress amidst the feasts that were given him; and he turned aside to Venice, to enjoy a similar reception from that rich republic. In these pleasures he lingered, lavishing money, and even giving away the fortresses of his kingdom in liberality to his hosts.

The hostile parties were in them ean time arming The *Politiques,* or neutral catholics, for the first time, showed themselves in the field. They demanded the freedom of Cossé and of Montmorency, and at length formed a treaty of alliance with the huguenots. Henry, after indulging in the ceremony of being crowned, was obliged to lead an army into the field. Sieges were undertaken on both sides, and what is called the fifth civil war raged openly. It became more serious when the king's brother joined it. This was the duke of Alençon, a vain and fickle personage, of whom it pleased the king to become jealous. Alençon fled, and joined the malcontents. The reformers, however, warred but languidly. Both parties were without active and zealous leaders; and the only notable event of this war was a skirmish in Champagne, where the duke of Guise re-

ceived a slight wound in the cheek. From hence came his surname of *Le Balafré*.

Since the massacre of St. Bartholomew's eve, at least since his frustrated attempt to escape, the young king of Navarre had remained a captive at court, under the watchful and envious eye of Catherine. Forgetful of his high destinies, Bourbon gave himself up to pleasure: some of his admirers assert that he affected to be dead to ambition, in order to lull the suspicions of the queen-mother, thus acting the part of Brutus at the court of Tarquin. His desire to escape could not have slept. To support the presence of his wife must alone have been bitter humiliation to him: Margaret was at once as debauched and as cruel as her royal brothers; and about this very time Duguast, one of the king's infamous favourites, fell under the dagger of a person hired by her to avenge an insult. Still Bourbon endured all with his characteristic gaiety. "I must abandon the mass and my wife," said he, "but, with the help of friends, I hope to be able to do without either." When the duke of Alençon escaped, he pressed the king of Navarre to accompany him; but the latter would not trust himself again to one who had before betrayed him; and it was not until some time after the duke's flight, that Bourbon succeeded in leaving the court. He bent his course towards Guienne, and at Niort publicly avowed his adherence to the reformed religion, declaring that force alone had made him conform to the mass.

It was about this time that the king, in lieu of leading an army against the malcontents, despatched the queen-mother, with her gay and licentious court, to win back his brother. She succeeded, though not without making large concessions. The duke of Alençon obtained Anjou, and other provinces in appanage, and henceforth was styled duke of Anjou. More favourable terms were granted to the huguenots: they were allowed ten towns of surety in lieu of six, and the appointment of a certain number of judges in the parliament.

Such weakness in Henry disgusted the body of the

catholics; and the private habits of his life contributed still more, if possible, than his public measures, to render him contemptible. He was continually surrounded by a set of young and idle favourites, whose affectation it was to unite ferocity with frivolity. The king showed them such tender affection as he might evince towards women: they even had the unblushing impudence to adopt feminine habits of dress; and the monarch passed his time in adorning them and himself with robes and ear-rings. The licentiousness of the court, and the demoralisation arising from the total absence of female virtue, which, since the reign of Francis I., had been notorious, were carried to such extent under Charles IX., that the higher ranks of the sex ceased to have charms, and became objects of disgust, even to the licentious. Hence came the indescribable tastes and amusements of Henry and his *mignons*, as his favourites were called, which raised up throughout the nation one universal cry of abhorrence and contempt.

The populace of Paris had from the first declared against the huguenots: the blood they had spilled on St. Bartholomew's eve was enough to fix them in their opinions. They cordially sympathised with the catholic chiefs, and with young Guise, who lived in a kind of exile in his government of Champagne, resentful on account of the lenity and concessions of the king in the late treaty. Their religion was menaced, and an association was formed to support it, which afterwards grew into the famous league. The idea might have been taken from the protestants, who at this time formed a closely united body. But many trace the origin of the league to a date some years anterior, and attribute it to the cardinal of Lorraine and his brother, the first duke of Guise. In my own view, if the league had any model, it was the institution of the jesuits, of which, about this period, it adopted the leading principle, viz. the necessity of an absolute chief. The first document of the union that was signed in Picardy lays stress on this as the chief point. It is curious to mark the dif-

ferent tendencies of the two religions. Rochelle at the same time refused to receive the prince of Condé as king of Navarre, otherwise than with only a few followers, stipulating that their leader should have no more authority over them than the judges in Israel. The catholics, however, at once looked to Guise as their chief. And when Henry, by his conduct, rendered himself utterly contemptible, when his brother showed a character equally null, and when, in fact, the race of Valois seemed likely soon to become extinct, the catholics began to look to the duke of Guise, not merely as a party leader, but as their future monarch. The Bourbons, the natural heirs to the crown, were set aside as heretics. The genealogy of the Guises was blazoned forth, as showing their descent from Charlemagne. It was argued that they were the true inheritors of the crown, the race of Capet being declared usurpers from the commencement. Such were the general reasonings of the leaguers. Their immediate plan was to force the king to summon the states-general, to employ their utmost efforts to secure the election of catholic members, and, by means of this majority, to revoke the privileges granted to the huguenots. Some also proposed to shut up the king and his brother in a convent, and offer the crown to the duke of Guise. The more experienced members of the party were, however, well aware that the time was not yet arrived for such extreme measures.

The states-general met at Blois in December, 1576. The huguenots themselves were eager for their meeting, from a recollection of the sentiments favourable to moderation and to tolerance, evinced by the last states, summoned at Orleans. They forgot the influence exercised at that period by the chancellor de l'Hôpital, as well as by Coligny. Now the league had spread its ramifications throughout the kingdom: the provincial assemblies and elections were completely influenced by them. The states were in the interest of Guise, as appeared from the nature of their first demands: these were the repeal of the edicts, and a declaration of war

against the heretics. They sought to obtain the force of law for their decrees, and conducted themselves in every way as an artful and factious assembly. Henry was roused from his apathy by these intrigues, and showed at once the sagacity of his mother. Instead of combating the league, he drew it forth from its secrecy, subscribed to it, and declared himself its chief. This was the most adroit blow that he could give to the ambition of Guise, who had no longer an excuse for being disloyal. To the demand of the states for war Henry acceded: he declared himself eager to begin it, and begged funds for that purpose. This request cooled the ardour of the states; and the commons avowed, that since war must be supported by taxes, they were not so averse to peace. The king thus countermined all the intrigues of the Guises. He was enabled to dismiss the states, and to grant, by the edict of Poitiers, such concessions as satisfied the huguenots, without being so disgraceful to the crown as the preceding treaty.

After this momentary exertion of prudence and activity Henry relapsed into his frivolous habits, and again sought the society of his minions. Jealousy still existed between the king and his brother; and the favourites increased it. One day when the king, accompanied by his young companions, all "desperately frizzed and starched, covered with gold and diamonds," was attending a ceremony, Bussy d'Amboise, a follower of the duke of Anjou, made his appearance, simply clad, but attended by six pages, frizzed and starched also, and clothed in cloth of gold, after the fashion of the *mignons*. The king was wroth at the insult; but the favourites vowed vengeance. After some combats and quarrels, the duke of Anjou and Bussy quitted the court together. The *mignons* did not want courage: three of them engaged soon after in a duel with three partisans of the duke of Guise. They were all slain after having killed two of their antagonists. The king was inconsolable, wept over their bodies, cut off their locks, and erected magnificent tombs for them. Another favourite, St.

Megrin, was a lover of the duchess of Guise. He was assassinated; and his fate was a new source of grief for Henry, who consoled himself by causing Bussy d'Amboise to be despatched in the same way.

The king of Navarre, in the mean time, who resided at Nerac, was strengthening his party. The greatest disorder reigned in Languedoc, the governors yielding obedience to neither of the kings, and threatening, upon the slightest pretext, to join one party and oppose the other. Nevertheless, peace subsisted, and there seemed really to exist no matter for negotiation. Catherine, however, could not rest in the idle court of her son. Under the pretext of conducting her daughter Margaret to her husband, the king of Navarre, she took a journey to Nerac, and proposed to bring Bourbon into a more amicable understanding. The consequence of her attempts was the breaking out of a new war, called the war *des Amoureux* or of *the Lovers*, it being excited by Margaret in revenge for the king's betraying to her husband her intrigues with the viscount de Turenne and the duke of Anjou. This war, which was confined to the capture of a few towns, and which served but to exercise and make known the valour and generosity of the king of Navarre, occupied the year 1580, and terminated in a peace little different from that which concluded the former war.

The league had slumbered since its first defeat at Blois. It was now to be roused into activity by the king of Spain. The duke of Anjou, that fickle and restless prince, not content with pretending to the hand of the queen of England, also grasped at the offer made by the revolted Flemings to proclaim him count and independent sovereign of Flanders. The French reformers crowded under his banners, and he marched northwards at the head of 12,000 men. He seized Cambray, acquired the dominion of the Low Countries, and might have reigned there in despite of the Spaniards, had it been possible for a son of Catherine to follow the rules of common honesty or prudence. But having conceived

a jealousy of the prince of Orange and of his new subjects, the duke attempted to make himself master of Antwerp. A massacre of the citizens took place by his orders; and the general indignation expelled him from the Low Countries. The duke of Anjou soon after died, in disappointment and shame.

This enterprise of a French prince, aided by French protestants, and not opposed by Henry, made a deep impression upon Philip II.: he vowed to give, thenceforward, occupation to the French at home. He first endeavoured to make use of the reformers themselves, and to induce the king of Navarre to attack Henry. On the other hand, but with more sincerity, he resuscitated the league by aid and by promises. Philip hoped thus to occupy and consume both parties in mutual war; but Bourbon resisted and rejected all his treacherous offers. Guise was less scrupulous. Towards the end of the year 1584 that duke retired from court, followed by all his adherents and the zealots of the league. Henry, unconscious of danger, though not blind to their intentions, pursued them with jests, not arms. Nancy, the capital of Lorraine, was their rendezvous; and here a solemn treaty was concluded in February, 1585, between the French leaguers and Philip of Spain. By this it was stipulated, that in case of Henry III.'s death, the cardinal of Bourbon, the only catholic of that family, should be called to the throne, to the exclusion of the king of Navarre; that he should renew the peace of Château-Cambresis, restore all subsequent conquests, and assist in the subjugation of the Low Countries. In return, Philip agreed to furnish an army, and to pay 50,000 crowns a month by way of subsidy.

The league had but to declare itself in order to be victorious. The towns of the north fell at once into the hands of its partisans. Burgundy was equally favourable to them. The south-west alone held for the reformers, yet rallied but feebly to the king of Navarre. The huguenot towns were in fact inimical to royalty, and longed to imitate Geneva in the establishment of a

republic. This was one great cause of the superior forces with which the leaguers now overwhelmed their enemies. As for Henry III., independent of the rival parties, he was not master of a fortress or a soldier. He had foreseen the coming storm, but had taken no precautions for procuring shelter or support. He first wrote to the king of Navarre for aid against the Guises, and ended by throwing himself into the arms of the league, and declaring against Navarre. Catherine's address, and the imbecility of Guise, (for *Le Balafré*, the assassin of St. Bartholomew's eve, wanted the talents and the courage as well as the generosity of his father,) saved Henry from being set aside as a cipher. He was allowed to place himself at the head of the league. In obedience to it, he issued ordonnances, prohibiting the reformed worship on pain of death, and banishing out of the kingdom all who previously adhered to it. Ten principal fortresses of the kingdom were given up to the leaguers, and war was declared against Henry of Navarre.

That prince was astounded on learning the success of the league, and its absorption, as it were, of the royal power. His first thought was the hopelessness of resistance; his next, that but one path was open to him—to perish gloriously. In his indignation against the perfidy of Guise he despatched a challenge to that duke, defying him to single combat, and calling heaven to witness that he took that step, not from vain bravado or despite, but for the sake of deciding briefly a quarrel, which would otherwise cost the lives of thousands. Guise returned no answer to the chivalrous appeal. Friends in the mean time rallied to support the king of Navarre. Montmorency declared for him. His companions, La Rochefoucault, De Rohan, Biron, and Turenne, joined him. Condé and his friend la Tremouille also hastened to his court. Knights were not wanting. But the days were past when the noblesse were of themselves all-sufficient for war. A sturdy and disciplined infantry was wanting as well as funds for its maintenance. Bourbon

was without either. Rosny, his friend, set out to sell his woods in Normandy: the countess of Grammont, his mistress, exchanged her jewels for gold; both to contribute their mite to the scanty treasures of the prince in his distress.

Notwithstanding the love universally borne to the king of Navarre he was unable to collect more than four or five thousand men to resist two armies, each of them 20,000 strong, commanded by the duke of Mayenne, the brother of Guise, and by the maréchal de Matignon. Fortunately the leaguers had neither union nor vigour, and were without military talents of any kind. Whenever they succeeded in surprising Bourbon, and in surrounding his small forces, his nimble Basques separated at a word. He himself imitating them, made his way through the hostile lines, and the leaguers soon heard of the distant exploits of one whom they deemed in their power. He had at the same time to defend himself with other weapons against other foes. Pope Sixtus issued excommunications against him and the prince of Condé. This gave him the opportunity of sending forth an indignant and eloquent defence, which he succeeded in getting affixed to the palace of the pontiff.

Henry III. was not displeased at the ill success of the generals of the league. It allowed him to assume more power; and he took upon him to give the command of the army, in the following year, to one of his favourites, Joyeuse, a brave and rash stripling. Thus, a victory would bring triumph and influence to one immediately attached to him, whilst a defeat would humble the overbearing party that constrained him to war. Joyeuse was eager to distinguish himself. With a small army he pressed closely upon the king of Navarre, who was at the head of still smaller numbers. The battle took place at Coutras, a little town, not many leagues from Bordeaux. The army of Joyeuse was chiefly composed of young nobles and gay courtiers, covered with finery and unused to war, although not lacking courage. The king of Navarre placed his infantry on either side, in columns,

his cavalry in the midst, divided into squadrons, each presenting a rank of fifty in front, though not six deep. His tactics were evidently of the old chivalric kind: he depended on the valour of the mounted gentlemen, rather than on the mass of vulgar infantry; whilst his own personal courage was not his least resource. After a prelude of cannon, Sully directing ably the artillery of his sovereign, the catholics began to attack with such fury, that they broke the squadrons on the right under Turenne. The army of Navarre forming a semicircle, the king was in the centre, considerably behind his wings, and concealed by a rising ground. Joyeuse, seeing the success of his first attack, led on his *battle*, or principal squadron. But the horses were fatigued ere they reached their enemies. In consequence, the charge was languid; the lance became useless, while, with the sword, the king of Navarre and his hardy warriors were far more formidable than the effeminate courtiers of Henry III. These were speedily vanquished, and Joyeuse himself was slain. Bourbon grappled with the standard-bearer of the enemy, crying out, "*Rends-toi, Philistin!*" "Surrender, Philistine!" No doubt the preachers that thronged and fought in the field had compared him, in their sermons, to king David; and Henry preserved a humorous recollection of the comparison even in the heat of action. The battle had begun, on the part of the huguenots, with a prayer and a psalm. It was made to end with one; the ministers shouting forth, as their pæan, one of the psalms of Marot—

> La voici l'heureuse journée,
> Où Dieu couronne ses élus!

Bourbon was unable to follow up this splendid victory: he was totally without funds. In some pacific conferences, Gonzaga duke of Nevers, one of the Italians introduced into France by the queen-mother, taunted him with his inability to raise the smallest sum, even in Rochelle. Not being able to deny the fact, the king of Navarre replied with sharpness, "That is because we have no Italian financiers among us." The army of

the huguenots was thus composed merely of volunteers. After the victory of Coutras, chief and soldier were eager to return home. They disbanded, and Bourbon was obliged to retreat. An army of German protestants had entered France in the commencement of the campaign, and had marched across the country to aid their allies in the cause of the reformation. They found the passage of the Loire impracticable, and were obliged to abandon their design. Harassed by the duke of Guise, who watched and followed them,—without a leader of talent or authority,—this powerful army of auxiliaries was likely to produce no advantage to the huguenots. Could the king of Navarre have joined them, he might have crushed the league in its birth. But he was now without a force. Henry III. joined in person the army led by Guise. Neither the king nor the duke attempted battle or exploit, until the Germans, worn and dispirited, began to make their retreat in separate bands. Guise attacked some of these, and indulged his propensities for slaughter. His partisans extolled his success, which considerably increased his popularity; whilst the imbecile monarch of France sunk deeper every day in absurdity and insignificance. Like many silly persons, the king was prodigiously fond of sumptuous funerals. That of Joyeuse was magnificent beyond example, and consoled the monarch for the loss of his friend. Epernon, created duke, was now the surviving minion; and he monopolised the extravagant favour of Henry. His insolence and prodigality accorded with his situation, and tended to increase and keep alive the contempt entertained by the people for their sovereign. Henry now created him admiral of France, and gave him the government of Normandy.

Such absurd prodigality of honours, towards a mere minion, at the very time when the successes of Guise claimed reward, excited the indignation of the duke, and of the Parisians, who adored him. The catholics had in part caught up the religious fervour, the scriptural allusions, and the turns of expression, peculiar to the hu-

guenots. Guise was their Gideon, their Maccabeus, the rod of the heretics, the saviour and support of the orthodox. The citizens of Paris, at the instigation of the league, had organised their means of resistance. The town was divided into sixteen quarters, each of which appointed a deputy; and thus was formed a council of sixteen, or *seize*. The body was known by the name of the *Seize*. They drew up a muster-roll of the armed citizens, and found their numerical amount to be 20,000. This was an army on which the league might depend.

In the commencement of 1588, the Guises summoned a meeting of their partisans at Nancy. The Parisians were earnest in entreating the duke to declare himself openly, and dethrone the imbecile Henry. But Guise still hesitated. Catholic historians vaunt, amongst other virtues, the resolution of the duke; yet never was conspirator more deficient in that necessary quality. In reply, the duke urged the Parisians of themselves to seize the king, while they joined in one of his devout processions; and he sent some of his followers to organise and direct the attempt. The sixteen did not want either zeal or courage to follow this advice, by which Guise sought to reap the advantage, without incurring the peril. But the citizens had one amongst them, named Poulain, who betrayed all their measures to the court. Henry, in consequence, kept himself close in the Louvre, and the plans of capture became impracticable. Epernon was despatched to Normandy to make sure of the principal towns, and to muster such a force as might awe the capital.

The sixteen, finding their intrigues discovered, were moved by fear of punishment, in addition to their zeal and their hatred towards the king: they therefore sent a fresh summons to Guise, entreating him to proceed to Paris, and brave the monarch openly. The duke could no longer recede, without fear of disgusting his party. He summoned resolution, though without any very fixed plan, and advanced towards Paris. On his way he received a mandate from Henry not to approach. He, however,

continued his march, for the purpose, he said, of pleading his own cause. His entry into Paris took place on the 9th of May. No troops accompanied him; but the citizens soon formed around him the most formidable escort, even kissing his garments, and displaying other signs of extravagant affection.

Instead of proceeding to his own hotel the duke alighted at that of the queen-mother, who was startled, and even terrified at the visit. Guise, however, appeased her fears by such good humour and gaiety, and such professions of loyalty, that Catherine proposed that they should both set out to the Louvre to visit the king. Catherine loved above all things to effect reconciliation, to be herself the arbiter, and to negotiate the terms. Guise consented. His consent strikes me as an act of irresolution, not of courage. Catherine sent word privately to the Louvre, that she was coming thither with the duke of Guise. Henry was thunderstruck at his enemy's boldness. What did he seek? For what purpose did he thus come?—*to* brave him? The king asked advice of those near him. A colonel of his guards declared that he was ready to run Guise through the body. Henry applauded his zeal, but bade him wait the signal. The abbé d'Elbene gave the same advice. "Strike the shepherd," said he, "and the sheep will disperse." But Henry was irresolute; and his other counsellors, who feared the consequences of exasperating the populace, advised that no attempt should be made upon the duke's life. In the midst of this consultation the queen and Guise arrived. The Louvre was full of guards, whom the duke took care to salute with his wonted affability. But Crillon, their commander, gave way to a gesture of impatience and contempt, which startled Guise, and showed him all the danger of his position. Consultations were still going on in the king's chamber, when Catherine and the duke entered. There was no time for dissimulation. Henry showed all his anger. "Did I not forbid you to approach Paris?" were the words with which he addressed the duke. The

latter partly denied having received the express order, and partly excused himself for disobeying it. Henry listened to something that Bellièvre whispered to him, still looking steadfastly on the duke. Catherine approached the king at the moment, and Guise could hear her using the language of dissuasion. He saw that it was a question whether to slay or spare him; and saw also that fear of the multitude, whose clamours were heard from without, alone saved him from the meditated blow. Henry seemed convinced by the arguments of Catherine. Guise, pretending fatigue, hastily retired.

Whatever were the previous views or resolves of Guise, the danger that had menaced him in the interview determined him in future to keep no terms with the king. On reaching his hôtel, in the rue St. Antoine, he summoned the sixteen, and made arrangements for an immediate revolt. He had, nevertheless, two days after, another interview with Henry, when he took care to be well guarded: it was Catherine who arranged it, in the hope of an accommodation; but it proved fruitless.

On the morning of the 12th of May, a large body of troops arrived to reinforce the Swiss and French guards. Henry ordered them to occupy the principal positions of the capital. The sight of the soldiers was a signal plain enough for the Parisians, who, instructed by Guise, instantaneously set about forming barricades in every street. Chains extended from house to house; carts and barrels formed their hasty intrenchments, which were heaped and filled with earth. Crillon, who had orders to keep the communication open betwixt the Louvre and the Bastille, was obliged to retreat from the rue St. Antoine. Notwithstanding his reinforcements the king was prisoner in his palace. Almost whilst I write, Paris has seen a renewal of these identical barricades, which tradition might have counselled. Some coincidences are singular. The barricade of the rue St. Antoine was in both cases first attacked. The Louvre has been in the nineteenth, as it was in the six-

teenth century, the head-quarters of French and Swiss guards mingled. The Swiss were doomed then, as since, to slaughter. A post of them was surrounded in the Cemetery of the Innocents, now the market of the same name, and slain by the partisans of the league, notwithstanding their supplicating cries of *Bon catholique, bon catholique!* The king was at length obliged to fly from his palace, and take refuge, first at Chartres, and then at Rouen.

Many of the historians of the time cast blame alike on Henry for not having assassinated Guise, and on Guise for allowing Henry to escape. The crime out of the question, Guise was not sorry for the king's flight. The traitor wanted audacity, and always crouched in his sovereign's presence; but now he was master of the capital, and of a potent force, he was no longer overshadowed or controlled. His efforts were directed to legalise his usurpation, and his first attempt was to bend the president, Achille de Harlai, to his views. De Harlai looked at Guise, and then replied, — "'Tis pitiable when the valet expels his master; as for me, my soul belongs to my Maker, and my fidelity to the king; my body alone is in the hands of the wicked. You talk of assembling the parliament: when the majesty of the prince is violated, the magistrate is without authority."

This opposition, as well as the inclination of the Parisians themselves, after the excitation of their revolt was over, to treat with the king and make use of his name at least, led Guise into more moderate measures. He proposed an arrangement, on condition that he should be appointed lieutenant-general of the kingdom, and that the states-general should be summoned at Blois to decide existing differences. Henry was weak enough to accede to these terms, and to sanction them by an edict of union, to the great discontent of Epernon, who at this juncture showed an indignant spirit that did him honour. As for Guise, his whole attentions were wisely directed towards the composition of the states, and the

appointment of deputies in his interest. For this he postponed the war against the king of Navarre, and overlooked the feeble acts of the king, who showed his authority at this time by totally changing the members of his council.

The opening of the states took place at Blois on the 16th of October. The duke of Guise, as grand master of the household, presided over the arrangements. The king, than whom no one knew better how to support dignity upon occasion, spoke with mildness and address, venturing a slight reflection upon the turbulence of the late events; as if to try the temper of the assembly. Their silence showed them fully in the interests of the league; and Henry was obliged to retrench the offensive words in the copy of his speech that was printed. Guise henceforth began to advance in his demands. He wished to be constable as well as lieutenant-general, and to have a guard; but Henry showed adroitness in parrying all these attacks against his authority on the part of the states, as well as on that of the duke. The king, indeed, was superior in sagacity at this time to his rival, who proceeded irresolutely and vaguely, but gradually, towards the goal of his ambition. Henry saw clearly that it was now a struggle for life and death between him and the usurper. One must fall; and he, in falling, would probably not be spared. He therefore made his resolve, — one from which it might be said that an accomplice of Charles IX. on St. Bartholomew's eve need not shrink. It was a crime; yet if the past weakness of Henry had not constituted the force of Guise, never would crime have been more amply excused by a sense of self-preservation and necessity.

Henry determined, in a word, to assassinate the duke. He consulted the brave Crillon. That soldier proposed to challenge Guise, and by sacrificing his own life in the combat make sure of slaying his adversary. He spurned the proposal to act the assassin, but promised to keep the king's secret. Henry found others less scrupulous than Crillon. Guise, in the mean time, was

repeatedly warned of these hostile intentions: he affected to despise them, but he took every precaution. The king summoned a council to be held on the morning of the 23d of December: he wished, he said, to have the rest of the day for a party of pleasure. So early, Guise was not attended by his intimate band. As he mounted the stairs to council, the officers of the guard surrounded him, and used the most supplicating entreaties that he would procure for them their month's pay. This crowd of petitioners kept off the duke's friends, and he entered the council chamber alone. Here, however, were numbers: the council was, in fact, assembled. Yet Guise, it is said, felt a misgiving: he was even unwell, and was obliged to call for a restoring draught. Perhaps he recollected the entreaties of his mistress, who that morning in vain endeavoured to dissuade him from attending the council. At this moment the king sent to summon Guise to his cabinet: the duke obeyed, and was engaged in lifting the tapestry of the door, when he was beset, his sword seized, and his body pierced by a number of wounds. His brother, the cardinal de Guise, was sent to prison, where he was soon after despatched by the halberds of his guards. Thus perished the original planners of the massacre of St. Bartholomew. Those who see the vengeance of heaven declared in the violent deaths of the perpetrators, in the misfortunes and extinction of their race, are not contradicted by these events.

Twelve days after the assassination of the Guises expired the queen-mother, Catherine of Medicis, almost forgotten in the turmoil of the moment. Indeed, for a long time she had been *usée*, according to the French expression, which may mean "morally worn out." No individual had ever produced a more pernicious effect upon a country than she had produced upon France. She introduced those habits of dissimulation and Machiavelian policy for which her country was famed. She taught them to her children, and communicated them to her court. When united, as they were in her, to extreme licentiousness of private morals, we can

scarcely imagine a more perfect combination of wickedness. Such she became in the acts of her later life, which, from their enormity and blackness, have cast a shade over her earlier career; so that whilst struggling for tolerance, or listening to the counsels of de l'Hôpital, Catherine is depicted as, even at that time, perfidious and ill intentioned. Truth is here sacrificed to the unity of the picture, to the imaginary consistency of a character. Human nature contradicts this, and sanctions the common proverb, "That no one of a sudden becomes a monster." *

The exasperation of the Parisians on learning the fate of the Guises knew no bounds. It was at first, indeed, stifled by fear; but, as the king showed no vigour to follow up the blow, grief soon burst forth in the accents of rage. The church was not slow to avenge its martyrs. The murder of Guise was an inexhaustible theme of eloquence to the preachers; that of his brother, a cardinal, was an impiety beyond the power of language to execrate. Henry was declared an heretic, an idolater. Processions were ordered to call down vengeance on the royal assassin; the nudity of both sexes, who mingled in them, being considered the attribute of the ceremony most acceptable. The church, in its rage, seemed to vie in absurd frivolity with the monarch whom it attacked. The priests of one of the principal churches in Paris made a *voute*, or waxen image, of Henry of Valois, — so the king was now designated; and the people were told to prick it devoutly with pins, in order to kill this modern Herod. More rational measures of hostility were at the same time taken. The duke of Mayenne, one of the surviving brothers of Guise, was declared head of the league. The loyal chiefs of the judicature were committed to prison. Rome was summoned to issue its anathemas; Spain to send her aid; and an army marched against Henry, who was now at Tours, beyond the Loire.

For that monarch there was now no refuge but to fling

* Nemo repentè fuit turpissimus.

himself into the party of the huguenots and the king of Navarre. He dreaded and hesitated to take this step. He was superstitious, and shrunk from an alliance with heretics; but the leaguers would not listen to his proposals of accommodation. Bourbon advanced with an army. He was warned not to trust himself to the assassin-prince, the perfidious son of Catherine; but he dared all, won instantly by his frankness upon the king, dissipated his mistrust, and the two monarchs entered into the most cordial understanding. Many nobles, disgusted with the Guises, and encouraged by the late acts of rigour, however criminal, rallied to Henry; and the latter soon found himself at the head of a formidable army of united protestants and catholics. Mayenne had as yet no force capable of resisting him. Henry marched without opposition to Paris, invested it, and took up his own quarters at St. Cloud.

The rage of the Parisians increased with their impotence. They had been beaten near Senlis, and could not hope to defeat the royal army. They made preparations, however, for a vigorous defence. Of all the partisans of the league none regarded its present distress with so much impatience as the sister of the late duke of Guise, the duchess of Montpensier. She had ever been enthusiastic in its behalf; and was known to wear a pair of golden scissors for the purpose, she was wont to say, of marking the tonsure on the head of Henry of Valois, and thus converting him into a monk. She had now, however, her brothers to avenge, and all means seemed justifiable to her.

Among those whom her penetration discerned as fit instruments of her vengeance, was Jaques Clement, a young Dominican friar, zealously attached to his religion, sombre, fanatic, voluptuous. He always announced the purpose of slaying with his own hand the great enemy of his faith. But he was far from being resolved or nerved for the attempt, until the duchess of Montpensier, learning his vague purpose, sent for him, and excited him by all the inducements of favour, flattery,

and condescension, to carry it into execution. Thus wound up to resolution, and emboldened by the leaguers, who pretended to imprison one hundred of the most notable citizens as hostages for his safety, Clement set out for St. Cloud. He was provided with letters for Henry from de Harlai, and from the count de Brienne, both prisoners, who were made to consider him a trusty messenger. The friar, thus provided, was taken by the outposts, of whom he boldly demanded access to speak with the king. There were some objections made to the admission of a stranger; but Henry over-ruled them, observing, that he could not refuse to see an ecclesiastic. Clement was, therefore, introduced: he fell on his knees, presented his letters, and whilst Henry was engaged in opening them, the friar stabbed him in the lower part of the stomach. The king exclaimed, "The wicked monk! he has killed me;" and, drawing out the knife, struck Clement with it. The attendants rushed in at the moment, and slew the assassin. At first the wound was not considered mortal; but on the following day its fatal effects became evident. Henry of Bourbon was summoned to the dying monarch, who declared him his successor; but warned him, that he would never reign over France unless he abandoned the creed of Calvin. Henry III. expired on the 2d of August, 1589.

CHAP. X.

1589—1610.

HENRY THE FOURTH.

So far beyond the bounds of common sense and judgment were men carried by the excitation of party, that the late imbecile monarch was lamented as a hero in the camp, whilst among the citizens his murder was celebrated as the most glorious triumph. The duchess of Montpensier flung her arms round the neck of the mes-

senger who brought the welcome tidings, crying, "Ah, my friend, is it true? is the monster veritably dead? what a gratification! I am only grieved to think he did not know it was I that directed the blow." She herself then went forth to spread the news. Of all orders of men the priesthood were most delighted: they were in ecstasies. Clement was declared a saint and a martyr, nay a deity. A statue was erected to him, with the inscription, "St. Jaques Clement, pray for us sinners!" His mother was addressed with the same scriptural salutation that was applied to the mother of our Lord. Nor was this the mere enthusiasm and fanatic madness of the subordinate pastors; the great shepherd, their infallible head, the pope himself, joined in all the impiety. The pontiff Sextus V. pronounced in person a public eulogium on St. Jaques Clement, and on the act of regicide, which he represented, from the very chair of St. Peter, as comparable with the incarnation and resurrection of the Saviour.

The first act meditated by Henry of Bourbon, now, on the extinction of the line of Valois, king of France as well as of Navarre, was to give assault to the guilty capital. But dissension was in his camp. Such impression had the arguments of the league made even upon its opponents, that the catholic royalists in the service of the last king hesitated to recognise Henry IV. as king of France. They at last acknowledged his title; but this act of acquiescence was accompanied with a request that he would again adopt the catholic faith. Henry had never been a bigot; he was not much attached to any form of faith. In his childhood he was a catholic, in his boyhood a protestant, in youth forced to be a catholic again; and when he embraced the reformed religion on his escape from court, we may suppose him to have been more influenced by resentment towards his enemies and gratitude towards his friends, than by any profound conviction. A gallant and a soldier, he was but little addicted to study or reflection; and although Henry yielded not to the zealots of either

side in practical piety, and in truly Christian benevolence, yet it may be supposed that he was very indifferent as to tenets. In all his manifestoes, from the very commencement of the troubles, he shows himself not averse to catholicism. It was the compulsory adoption of it that he resented. "How," he asked, "was his conversion attempted? With the dagger to his throat." — Henry had, years before, offended his friend Mornay, a stern calvinist, by his indifference on this point, and even previous to his alliance with the late king he had declared himself open to conviction. He, in fact, always contemplated his conversion to the catholic faith as a possibility. His principle was to do this with honour, to make his conscience yield voluntarily, but never under circumstances of constraint. He, therefore, at the present moment, rejected the demands of the royalists: and they, with Epernon at their head, abandoned the new monarch to his little band of huguenots; and even that force, too insignificant to be called an army, Henry was obliged to divide; a detachment under one of his captains being required to oppose the Spaniards, who threatened an invasion of Picardy. Issuing, therefore, his first edict, which promised every surety and support to the catholic religion, and which summoned the states-general of the kingdom to meet at Tours, in October, the king retreated towards the sea-coast, resolving to await, in the neighbourhood of Dieppe, the succours that he had requested from Elizabeth of England.

The duke of Mayenne, now chief of the league, caused the cardinal of Bourbon to be declared king, by the return of the parliament. He was proclaimed under the unlucky name of Charles X. As this mock monarch was a prisoner at Tours, Mayenne had no one to interfere with his authority; and he was himself declared lieutenant-general of the kingdom. The duke lost no time in endeavours to signalise his new command. At the head of upwards of 20,000 men he marched in pursuit of the huguenots, promising the Parisians to bring the *Navarrois* captive in a few days.

Henry was near Dieppe with his little army, consisting of 3000 French infantry, two regiments of Swiss, some lansquenets, and a troop of gallant followers, constituting his cavalry. As soon as he learned Mayenne's approach he retired from the town, the defences of which his little army could not man, and posted himself in and around the castle of Arques, which is northward of Dieppe, and about four miles distant. Many present counselled Henry to embark, and put himself in safety beyond the sea, but Biron opposed this with all his might. "Here we are in France; and here let us be buried," exclaimed he: — "fly now, and all your hopes vanish with the wind that bears you." The words which Biron spoke were accordant to the resolution of his master; and every effort was henceforth directed to entrench the camp, which stretched from the château of Arques to the little village of the same name. The advanced post was a lazaretto or hospital for lepers.

Mayenne arrived with his army in sight of Arques, about the middle of September, and betrayed the dilatoriness of his disposition in hesitating and making divers partial attacks. The cannon of the château protected the royal army; and Mayenne, with all his superiority, was not confident that he should carry the intrenchments. At length, on the 23d, he prepared to keep his promise of overpowering the king. He attacked the lazaretto with a large force of lansquenets. On Henry's side fought also a few of those German mercenaries. After some skirmishing the lansquenets of the league advanced; not, however, in hostile attitudes, but with their caps on their pikes, and shouting "*Vive le roi!*" in token of amity. Their compatriots within the intrenchments welcomed them, and even helped them to get between the lines. The assault being at the same time given on other points, the lansquenets, either changing their minds, or acting upon a treacherous intention, formed at the very first, and ran upon the Swiss with their pikes. The leaguers poured over the intrenchments in the confusion: Biron was surrounded: from the very first

the stoutest friends of Henry gave up the battle, and looked upon his cause as lost. The monarch was almost deserted; his nobles had sallied out to charge the cavalry of the enemy, and there was, at the very moment, a sanguinary conflict and *mêlée* of cavaliers upon the plain. "In all France are there not fifty gentlemen to die with their king?" cried Henry in despair, and he seized a lance to fight with the Swiss. Chatillon, the son of Coligny, had just come up, and was near enough to hear his prince's ejaculation. He answered it by uniting his efforts to those of Henry. The Swiss by this time had rallied: the fifty gentlemen whom the king in despair had summoned were by his side; Henry charged at their head the successful leaguers, routed the lansquenets, and drove them back over the intrenchments. The lazaretto itself was soon freed, and Mayenne was completely worsted.

It was after this victory that Henry IV. wrote to Crillon, "Hang thyself, brave Crillon! we have fought at Arques, and thou wast not there. Adieu! brave Crillon! *je vous aime à tort et à travers.*"

The leaguers retreated to Picardy, in hopes of being supported by the Spaniards. Henry, reinforced by the long expected English, advanced to Paris, and well nigh surprised the affrighted capital. The tower and gate de Nesle, situated where the Institute now stands, was then the limit of Paris.* La Noue swam his horse round by the river, but was driven back by musketry; whilst the petard applied by Chatillon to the gate would not explode. The royalists avenged themselves by the plunder of the Fauxbourg St. Germain, which yielded a rich booty. Sully had 3000 crowns for his share. There was much cruelty on both sides; the Parisians hanging those whom they suspected, and Biron retaliating on the prisoners he had made. Winter did not interrupt the fury of the war, which raged all through the kingdom. Henry employed his arms in reducing several towns in

* There is a picture by Wouvermans in the Louvre, which represents the Tour de Nesle, then the gate of Paris, with the Pont-Neuf in the distance.

Normandy. In the spring of 1590 he was engaged in the siege of Dreux, when the duke of Mayenne, reinforced by a body of Spaniards, advanced to relieve the town, and try his fortune once more in war against Bourbon.

The king did not tarry at Dreux, but advanced to the rencontre. The two armies came in presence on the evening of the 13th of March. Both encamped on the plain of Ivry, destined, on the morrow, to be the field of battle. The leaguers amounted to 16,000; the royalists were far inferior in number. On the eve of action, de Schomberg, the general of the German auxiliaries, was pressed by his troops to ask Henry for their pay. The king, destitute of funds, was irritated at the request. "A man of courage," he replied, "would not have asked for money on the eve of battle." The next morning, while preparing for action, Henry perceived the general, and thus accosted him: "Schomberg, I have insulted you, and as this day may be the last of my life, I would not carry away the honour of a gentleman, and be unable to restore it. I know your valour, and ask your pardon: embrace me."—"Your majesty wounded me yesterday—you kill me to-day," replied the veteran, overcome; and he spoke truth, for he perished in the battle.

The king was most in dread of the Spanish lances. His own cavalry, composed of gentlemen volunteers, had long since rejected the lance as troublesome, and fought with sword and pistol. Henry, therefore, divided them into small squadrons, that if one was broken, it might rally to the others; and he thus favoured his mode of fighting, which was rather the ordering of combats man to man, than the manœuvring and shock of masses.* Cavalry and infantry were mingled; regiment supported regiment, and Biron commanded a corps of reserve. After a prayer, in which Henry joined, he addressed his officers ere he gave the signal, desiring, that if they

* This, no doubt, is the reason why Bonaparte spoke so slightingly of Henry Quatre as a general.

should be obliged to quit the field, they would rally towards three trees, which he pointed out on the right; "and if astray," added he, "follow my white plume; you will find it ever on the road to honour and to victory."

There was little order in the action: on one wing the Germans of the league behaved ill and yielded; on the other the royalists were beaten, but Biron rallied them with reinforcements. The combat was decided by the central force of either army; the count d'Egmont leading the Spaniards, and Mayenne the gentlemen of his party, against the king. The leaguers were marshalled too closely together. Henry's squadron got among them, and a sanguinary *mêlée* ensued. The king was reported to be killed, but soon showed his white plume in the path that he had promised. Egmont was slain. The standard-bearer of Mayenne fell by Henry's own hand; and the army of the leaguers was routed and driven from the ground. Biron had overlooked the fight, reinforced weak points, and rallied fugitives, whilst the monarch himself fought. "Sire," said Biron, after the action, "we changed places: you did Biron's duty; Biron yours." Sully, the friend of Henry, was found disabled by a number of wounds on the field of battle.

The victory of Ivry enabled the king to reduce all the small towns around Paris, and finally to invest the capital. His soldiers were anxious to take the city by storm, and wreak vengeance on the stronghold of the league. But Henry sought to spare his capital, and to reduce it by winning rather than by forfeiting the esteem of its inhabitants. He at the same time formed a blockade, purposing, through famine, to subdue his enemies. Mayenne had gone to Flanders, to seek aid from Farnese, prince of Pârma, general of king Philip in that country. The duke of Nemours, uterine brother of the Guises, commanded in the capital, supported by the Spanish ambassador Mendoza, and the legate of the pope. These personages exerted themselves to the utmost in engaging the Parisians to support the privations

of a siege. The priesthood walked in procession, armed with sword and casque, and were reviewed by the legate, who was much alarmed by the joyous firing of these awkward recruits. Henry tried, by negotiation, to bring the Parisians to terms, but the fanatical party was too powerful. By way of menace, the huguenots assaulted and took all the fauxbourgs, or suburbs, in one night; the king overlooking the general attack from his quarters on Montmartre. The besieged were at length reduced to extremities, and began to eat all kinds of loathsome aliments, carrion, ground bones, and even human flesh. Their numbers were estimated at 230,000.* The duke of Nemours sent away the useless *mouths*: Henry took pity on the people thus driven forth, and suffered them to pass his lines; nay, he was even moved with compassion towards the stubborn city, and granted a passage to several convoys of provisions for its relief.

Mayenne, however, approached with the prince of Parma, and Henry was obliged to leave his quarters at Montmartre to combat the Spaniards. This diversion was the sole aim of Farnese, who, retreating from the king, fell suddenly upon Lagny, a town commanding the course of the Marne, and took it. Provisions of all kinds immediately floated down to Paris. In vain the king challenged Farnese to action. The latter replied, "It was the business of the king to force him." This Henry could not do; and the prince, having fully succeeded in relieving Paris, retired again into the Low Countries.

This disappointment, at the moment when the royalists were expecting to make themselves masters of the capital, was almost tantamount to a defeat. The army, as usual, became in a great measure disbanded when its aim was gone; and, in the state of languor and inactivity imposed on both sides, fresh parties sprang up,

* Perefixe estimates the population of Paris in that day at 300,000; but this must appear an exaggeration, if we consider that the fauxbourgs were not included. He says it was double that number in Louis XIV.'s reign, an estimate also exaggerated, since Paris at the present moment does not contain 900,000 inhabitants.

and fresh intrigues were the consequence. Mayenne was crossed by the Spaniards and the duke of Nemours. Henry was pestered on one side by the catholics, who besought his conversion; on the other by the huguenots, who threatened to abandon him if he took such a step. That he had long meditated it, there is no doubt. On his accession he had promised to re-examine his conscience, and to listen to the arguments of the orthodox. Policy, not conviction, was now the chief, if not the only argument with him, in estimating creeds. The old cardinal of Bourbon, the Charles X. of the league, was dead. His nephew, now cardinal of Bourbon, began, though in the interests of Henry, to entertain projects of ambition. He succeeded in forming a new third party of catholics, opposed, however, to Mayenne, to Spain, and to the league; attached to Henry, yet insisting on his conversion as indispensable. The act which had been loudly demanded by queen Elizabeth and the German princes, from whom the king was then expecting aid,—that celebrated edict in favour of the protestants, the first that Henry issued,—at once offended the new party and strengthened the league. The king was glad to escape from these intrigues to feats of war, by which, had he possessed funds or armies, he would have soon decided the question, and cut the Gordian knot of religious differences. He was this year, however, obliged to confine himself to petty enterprises. He took Chartres, and laid siege to Rouen. Mayenne instantly summoned the prince of Parma to march to the relief of this town. The prince negotiated, and refused to stir until the town of La Fère was delivered to him. Philip II. had, in fact, separated his interests from those of Mayenne: he now sought to turn the league to his own advantage; a selfish policy, that contributed more than any other cause to establish Henry on his throne. To this throne Philip hoped to elevate his daughter the infanta, whom the young duke of Guise was to espouse. The pope's legate seconded his views, and Spanish gold gained the sixteen, who governed the municipality of Paris.

The duke of Mayenne was at Soissons, expecting the army of Farnese, when the sixteen sought to consummate their authority. The personages who most stood in their way were the chiefs of the parliament, and Brisson, who, during the captivity of Harlai and of the loyal members, had been promoted to the presidency. He had become disgusted with the ferocity of the sixteen, and had shown this in his judgments. A surreptitious order was procured for the execution of this magistrate and two of his fellows; and it was instantly carried into effect by Bussi, a red-hot leaguer. This outrage disgusted and roused the citizens. Mayenne was called to the capital. The murderers of Brisson, with the exception of Bussi, were themselves hanged, and the Parisians applauded the retribution. The sixteen were deprived of their authority; and Mayenne, now aware of the perfidy of Spain and the fickleness of the mob, regained the influence with which he might either oppose or treat with Henry.

The king pressed the siege of Rouen, when word was brought that the prince of Parma had again entered France. Leaving Biron in command of the siege, Henry marched to meet him; but had not force sufficient to warrant his giving battle. At the head of merely a reconnoitring party of an hundred horse, he was surprised at Aumale by the prince of Parma's advanced guard. Sully begged him to retire; but Henry, ever anxious to exchange blows, fought in the rear; was exposed to the most imminent danger; and received a wound, fortunately but slight, from a pistol-shot. It was on this occasion that queen Elizabeth begged of him not to expose his person so rashly. Mornay wrote, that "he had long enough played the part of Alexander: it was time for him to act Augustus."

This glory, however, served but to veil the disasters of the campaign. Biron's force was routed by a sally of the Rouennois, and the siege was completely raised. Henry's bravest captains now began to fall around him. La Noue had not long before perished in battle. Biron

was carried away by a cannon-shot at Epernay. The force of the royalists alone could never, without concessions, reduce the stubborn spirits of the league in obedience to Henry. He therefore began seriously to meditate on the expediency of taking the grand step of recantation.

The states-general assembled at Paris in the commencement of the year 1593. The duke of Mayenne, who trembled for his influence, attempted to divide the assembly into five estates, placing the court, the great officers of the crown, and governors of provinces, apart from the small noblesse. The judicial body, or presidents of parliament, were also to be apart, as in the time of Henry II. But this was over-ruled; and the ancient division of three estates prevailed. The avowed object of the assembly was to elect a king. All agreed that the existence of a protestant king was inadmissible; a principle not irrational for zealous catholics, considering that the monarch was to possess absolute power, and that his ordinances were to be laws. The wonder is, that no guaranty was imagined in the form of a representative body, invested with the right of assembling and of sharing in legislative functions. But this amalgamation of monarchy and liberty was not yet considered feasible. Anxieties for freedom were lost in the zeal for religious ascendancy; and all those fiery demagogues, who represented the popular spirit, were inoculated with the bigotry, and bought with the gold, of Spain.

There were, in fact, but three parties in the states. First, the *politiques*, or catholics; anxious not to interrupt the legitimate line of succession, provided Henry would recant. At the head of this were the great personages of the judicature. The second was the party of Mayenne, the aristocracy of the league; wavering and unfixed in their choice and determinations. The third, and the most powerful, was that of Spain, supported by the legate. They argued, that the Salic law was not fundamental; that females might succeed and

reign in France; and that Philip's daughter, the infanta, had the best claim to the crown, in the right of her mother Elizabeth, daughter of Henry II.

The views of the latter party were crossed by an expedient which the king adopted, that of despatching a request for an interview between the catholic nobles of the army and those of the states. It took place at Suresne, notwithstanding the dissuasions of the legate, and the opposition of the Spaniards, who were still more mortified at learning that Henry, in the very opening of the conference, gave it to be understood that he was willing to be converted. In fact, he was already engaged in listening to the most learned doctors of the catholics; while very many of the protestants, even of the protestant divines, counselled him to accept catholicism rather than perpetuate the civil war. The legate and the Spanish party exerted themselves to do away the effect of this concession. The legate threatened to withdraw from the city, if negotiations were entered into with a relapsed heretic,—so he styled Henry. The duke of Feria, relying too confidently on the Spanish party in the states, proposed openly that the crown should be voted to the infanta, who was to marry a German prince. This proposal, though often mooted, and not disapproved in private meetings, excited the ill humour of the assembly, and especially incensed the bishop of Sens, who, though a zealous leaguer, burst forth into an invective against the selfishness of the Spaniard. The old party of the league were highly offended at the condition coupled with the proposal, by which a German prince was to be brought forward. An amendment was devised; and the Spanish party promised that the infanta, in the case of her election, should espouse a prince of France or of Lorraine. This flattered many competitors. The duke of Savoy became one of their number, as did the cardinal of Bourbon, one of the royalists of Henry's camp. The young duke of Guise, had, however, the fairest hopes of the rich prize, when the royalists of the league took a decisive step in Henry's

favour. Incited by the president Lemaître, and Molé, one of its chief officers, the parliament of Paris issued a decree, declaring that the Salic law was in force, and could not be abrogated; and that the crown of France could not pass to a stranger. Such a step as this required eminent courage, considering that the successive chiefs of the parliament had been imprisoned and murdered for opposing the league. The fate of Brisson was of very recent occurrence. At present, fortunately, the sixteen were no more; and the demagogues in the Spanish interest had lost influence over the people, who suffered for want of provisions, and who now at last began to long for peace. This act of courage on the part of the judicature gave a severe check to the league; and, by the abjuration of the king, which took place in July, in the cathedral of St. Denis, it received a blow from which it could not be recovered by all the money of Spain or the anathemas of the legate.

Henceforward almost the only victories of Henry were those which he won over the hearts of his subjects by his generosity, magnanimity, and patience. He granted a truce; he extended it, and showed the utmost reluctance to use the sword, though the Parisians still refused to receive him. The irresolute Mayenne had again united his interests with those of Spain; but the zeal of both had cooled; and the duke still remained at enmity with the king, more from shame to submit than from any hopes of successful resistance. Henry unceasingly pursued the paths of conciliation. His ambassadors wore out the hostilities of the court of Rome, where cardinal d'Ossat supported by his talents the interests and character of his master. The extravagant enthusiasm of the league had evaporated; in part it had been reasoned down by the mild and rational philosophy promulgated in the Essays of Montaigne, and in part scouted by the poignant ridicule of the *Satire Menippée*. These are the two chief literary works of the epoch; the former sufficiently known to every reader, the latter one of the finest specimens of

political satire to be found in any language. It proved to the leaguers what Hudibras proved to the English puritans; — it exposed the absurdity and hidden selfishness of fanaticism, and showed that ridicule might be made a more effectual weapon than the sword.

As the influence of the league daily declined, even in the capital, its remaining zealots exerted themselves to stay the downfall of their cause. An assassin was suborned to make away with Henry IV. by the same mode in which Henry III. had been removed. The chief of the jesuits in Paris, and a popular curate, united to hire a person named Barrère for this diabolical purpose. But Barrère wanted the zeal of Jaques Clement; missed his opportunity at one time, became faint-hearted at another, was seized, and confessed his purpose and its instigators. The open measures of defence adopted by Mayenne were not more successful. He in vain endeavoured to secure Paris to the league by resuscitating the power of the sixteen and of the rabble, which he himself had formerly crushed. He removed the military governor, and appointed in his place Brissac, who might, he thought, be trusted. The duke's own want of confidence, however, was betrayed by his quitting the capital and bringing his family along with him. Brissac failed not to treat with Henry; and it was arranged between them that the king should make his entry into Paris on the 22d of March.

On the day previous Brissac took occasion to despatch a body of the Spanish garrison to surprise a convoy of provisions which, he pretended, were for the army of Henry. Under similar pretexts he dispersed and wearied the troops most attached to the league. The Spanish envoy, the duke of Feria, conceived some suspicions, and communicated them to Brissac, who affected the utmost zeal and activity, and summoned the principal citizens to the Hôtel de Ville. To them he frankly disclosed his intentions, which were warmly seconded by L'Huillier, provost of the merchants, and by the sheriffs of the city. Every preparatory measure was

taken. The troops of Henry were to arrive by two in the morning at the gates, which were opened and unblocked. Henry hesitated long; he was fully aware of the danger of engaging in the narrow streets of a city, which had shown itself so inveterate, and amidst a population whose fanatic zeal might be roused by a chance word or a random shot. The enterprise prospered, however, beyond his wishes. The sixteen and their partisans were either scattered, or blockaded in their houses: every gate and post of importance throughout the city was in the hands of the royalists ere day lighted up the triumph of the king to the awakened eyes of those who were not in the secret. But a single post of Spanish troops made resistance, and theirs was the only blood that was shed upon this joyous occasion. Henry having been presented with the keys by the provost L'Huillier, and having invested Brissac with the white sash of the Bourbon party, in lieu of the embroidered one, of which the marshal made an offering, entered his capital by the Porte Neuve, or New Gate, which was opposite the Tuileries, and within the precincts of that palace. No voice save those of acclamation hailed him, whilst he proceeded to return thanks in the cathedral of Nôtre Dame. He then took up his quarters in the Louvre, and dined in public. In the afternoon of the same memorable day, he proceeded to a window near the gate of St. Denis, in order to see the Spanish garrison march out of the city. "Commend me to your master," said Henry, saluting these sullen auxiliaries of the league: "depart in peace, but let us never see you here again."

To subdue the provinces was an easy task after the reduction of the capital. None could longer make resistance on the plea of principle, and Henry was forward to satisfy the selfishness or ambition of every noble. Montmorency, who had declared for the king before his conversion, was created constable: he was governor of Languedoc, and his influence kept the proud duke of Epernon in check. Bretagne still held out under the

duke of Mercœur; but the surrender of Rouen by Villars secured the important province of Normandy. Villars demanded the place of admiral as the price of Rouen: Henry had already bestowed this office on Biron, a brave young follower, the son of the late marshal. Biron, impetuous and quick, but rash and fickle in temper, instantly resigned; a generous act of sacrifice that he failed not speedily to regret. Henry marched against Mayenne, besieged and took Laon, before which town he lost the gallant Givri, who exposed himself from the hopeless love which he bore to one of the daughters of Guise. A letter of Henry to this young noble ran in these terms: — "Thy victories prevent my sleeping. Adieu Givri! Here's food for thy vanity!"

The conquest of Laon, notwithstanding the efforts of the Spaniards to relieve it, might serve as a demonstration throughout the kingdom, that the league and its chief, Mayenne, possessed no longer the force to resist. Picardy therefore submitted, not, however, without an arrogant stipulation made on the part of Amiens, that no troops should be admitted within its walls. In a little time the towns of Champagne also resumed their allegiance. The young duke of Guise bowed the knee before his sovereign, and made a merit of bringing the adhesion of the town of Rheims.

After the capture of Laon, Mayenne returned into Burgundy, where he confirmed his strength by decapitating the principal burgesses of Dijon, who meditated a surrender to the king. The war also continued in Provence, where Lesdiguieres, Henry's general, opposed the duke of Savoy, who had aimed, during the troubles of the civil war, to carve out for himself a little sovereignty from the south-east of France. Negotiations continued with the pope, to whom Henry was most anxious to be reconciled. The pontiff held out hopes in secret, whilst he publicly maintained the most frigid and insulting demeanour towards the French ambassador. The king used every means of evincing the sincerity of his recantation. He joined in public proces-

sions, and paid the most devout attention to the ceremonies of the church. The same spirit of conciliation led him to be lenient towards the jesuits, whom the university now persecuted before the parliament as the abettors of regicide and assassination. They were protected by the quiescence of the king, who already forgave the attempt made by Barrère upon his life. He had reason to regret his forbearance, when in the December of this year, amidst the felicitations of his court, who crowded round him on his return from Picardy, a stroke of a dagger was aimed at his face. It pierced his mouth, and fortunately came against a tooth, which it broke. The assassin was Jean Châtel, a native of Paris, and a pupil of the jesuits. He had, it seems, been an abandoned sinner, so deep in crime, that no penance could be devised by his priestly confessor great enough to expiate his faults, save that of slaying an heretic prince with his own hand. He undertook to perform this act of penitence on the person of Henry; and, happily for his country, failed. He was tortured and torn by four horses, and the order of the jesuits was expelled from the kingdom. "Was it necessary," said Henry, alluding gaily to his wound, "that the jesuits should be convicted by my mouth?"

The following year was employed by the king in subduing the provinces of the south-east. He marched against Mayenne, who was supported by the Spaniards, under the constable of Castile. There was no regular engagement, and but two skirmishes took place; in the first of which, at Fontaine Française, Henry fought as at Aumale, with a few hundred horse against the enemy's van-guard, and completely routed it. Biron had similar success on another occasion, and the Spaniards were driven out of France. Mayenne was about to retire to Spain, when a message from the king allowed him to return to Chalons, and gave assurance that the door of reconciliation and pardon was yet open even to him. In a short time afterwards, the pope granted full absolution to Henry, and acknowledged him as the Most

Christian King. Mayenne, upon this, pretended that all his scruples were removed. He made submission, and received pardon; and this stubborn chief of the league proved afterwards far more faithful to Henry than the huguenot comrades who had fought with him from the commencement of the war.

The king was now doomed to find enemies in his ancient partisans; and it must be owned that the protestants had some cause for discontent. All the great offices and governments at the disposal of the state had been distributed to the catholic leaders, as the price of their submission. Not only to obtain that submission, but to conciliate the pope, Henry consented to follow the counsel of the catholics chiefly. He had not issued to the calvinists a satisfactory guaranty of their rights; and whilst even Mayenne, the crushed and conquered Mayenne, had provinces under his command, as well as towns and fortresses of surety, the huguenots had still to confide solely in the honour and forbearance of the king. Doubtless to these just causes of complaint the selfish cravings of private ambition were added. The party of the reformers began in consequence to raise its head, no longer in support of the king but in independence of him, and manifested a kind of inert opposition. The chiefs of the huguenots were La Tremouille and the duke de Bouillon. The latter has been known to the reader, in our recital of the early part of the war, as La Tour d'Auvergne viscount de Turenne. By marrying the heiress of the de la Mark family, he inherited the duchy of Bouillon, which Henry, indeed, secured to him; but, nevertheless, against which there were many rival claimants to disquiet the new duke.

Owing to this discontent of the reformers, and to their withholding the aid on which he always counted, Henry was unable to carry on with vigour the war which he had declared against Spain. The open resistance of the league did not distress him so much as the neutrality of the huguenots. The Spaniards, commanded by the archduke Albert, took Calais, and ravaged Artois. The

king applied to queen Elizabeth on this occasion, who immediately demanded the restitution of Calais as the price of her aid. "You must excuse me," answered Henry; "I would rather be robbed by my enemies than by my friends." But Elizabeth was at that time still indignant on account of Henry's recantation.

Acknowledged by the pope and by the chiefs of the extinct league, the king no longer feared to convoke a national assembly in order to recruit his funds. It was not the states-general, however, that he summoned. Both Henry and his minister Sully hated the democracy, not without reason, indeed, during the fanaticism of the league. An assembly of notables was therefore in preference appointed to meet, not in Paris but at Rouen. Henry, who particularly admired Francis I. amongst his predecessors, showed that he entertained the peculiar aristocratic feelings which we have noticed in that prince — a jealousy of the higher aristocracy, but a love for the class of the nobly born. In his opening discourse, when mentioning his "noblesse," the king added, "from which I do not distinguish the princes of the realm, the quality of gentleman being the noblest title we possess." This indication of royal sentiments is the most important circumstance in the assembly, which was productive of little effect. They voted no funds, and left the government to stop the salaries of its officers, in order to supply the wants of the moment. Here it is a wonder that the sagacity of Sully did not perceive the uselessness of an assembly of which the aristocratic members feared to vote supplies for a people whom they did not represent. But Sully was blinded by aristocratic pride. The absence of the huguenot chiefs, then almost in open revolt, prevented any thing like an edict in their favour.

In the commencement of the following year, Philip II., sinking in years, mortified by the ill success of his manifold schemes, and insulted by the English who had taken Cadiz, one of the principal towns in his dominions, made some indirect advances towards peace.

Henry was not adverse to an accommodation; when the enterprise of a Spanish officer, named Telle, the commander of Dourlens, who succeeded in surprising and capturing the town of Amiens, put an end for the time to all prospects of amicable adjustment. The king was dreadfully cast down by the news, and the court was struck with stupor. "I have been playing the part of king of France long enough," said Henry to the fair Gabrielle, for whom the love of the monarch was such that it had caused his vigilance to slumber, "I must now act the king of Navarre." He meant that he must mount his horse, be alert, and incessantly combating. Sully exerted himself to find the supplies; yet, notwithstanding the recent assembly of the notables, he could hit on no expedient, save that of creating and selling useless offices. The parliament thought proper to expostulate against this, and talked of "God having confided to them the keeping of justice."—"You make a mistake there, sir," cried the king, interrupting the president; "it is to *me* that God has confided the keeping of justice, and I entrust that keeping to *you*." This quick and just assertion of prerogative startled de Harlai. There is no feeling to be found more strongly marked in the Memoirs of Sully (and the monarch no doubt participated in these prejudices of his minister) than the contempt felt by the noble and the soldier for the lawyer, even though the latter could trace his descent from a race of magistrates. The noblesse of the robe was disdained by the noblesse of the sword; and yet Henry owed his crown as much to the firmness of the one as to the valour of the other.

The king now turned all his force towards Amiens, and invested it. The archduke marched to its relief, but was disinclined to venture a battle. A few skirmishes, merely, took place; and the Spaniards failing to throw succours into the town, it surrendered. The duke of Mayenne and the old leaguers showed their sincerity on this occasion by combating in the ranks of the king. Their rencontres with the Spaniards, so

lately their friends and allies, brought on new proposals for peace. Commissioners on both sides met at Vervins to arrange preliminaries. Henry took advantage of the truce to lead in person an expedition against the duke of Mercœur, who still held out in the remote province of Britany. The approach of the king intimidated him, however: he offered to submit; and adroitly proposing to give his daughter and heiress in marriage to Henry's son by Gabrielle d'Estrées, he obtained favourable terms. That illegitimate son was Cæsar, created duke of Vendôme.

On his return from thus pacifying the internal troubles of his kingdom, Henry found his commissioners partly agreed with those of Spain, as to the terms of a treaty. The only obstacle was raised by his allies, the queen of England and the states of Holland, as Spain persisted obstinately in not acknowledging the independence of the Dutch, and objected equally to a cessation of hostilities. The king certainly did not show himself inclined to make much sacrifice or exertion for these insurgents, to whose remonstrances he replied, ... that they were very well able to defend themselves without aid; and that after so many troubles and so long a war, his kingdom had such absolute need of repose, that he could not sacrifice the hopes of it to any foreign consideration. The treaty of Vervins was therefore concluded in May, 1598. The Spaniards restored all the towns that they still held in Picardy, Calais included, whilst Henry gave up Franche Comté and the Charolois together with Cambray. The duke of Savoy was included in the accommodation; the disputed point of the marquisate of Saluces being left to the arbitration of the pope.

Previous to this conclusion of peace with foreign countries, Henry had applied himself to remove all discontent at home, by satisfying the just desires of the huguenots. On his return from Britany he received the deputies of the protestants at Nantes, and consulted them as to their wants and the guaranty which they desired.

Acting on their advice, tempered by his own prudence, and guided by the wisdom of de Thou and other counsellors, Henry drew up and issued the famous edict of Nantes. By this the reformers were to enjoy freedom of worship in all the towns where their creed then prevailed. They were allowed to have meetings of their representatives, as well as to raise sums for their clergy, paying at the same time the tithe due to the established church. In suits at law their judges were to be half catholic half protestant; and several towns of surety were left to them for a certain time. The parliament made considerable opposition to the registering of this edict; and the king was obliged to use menaces as well as persuasion to overcome their obstinacy.

Having thus established his throne, and by an admirable mixture of firmness and conciliation silenced the two contending parties, or at least left them no pretext for troubling the repose of the state, Henry applied himself to regulate the internal administration of the kingdom. All indeed was not as he wished. He had been compelled to parcel out the provinces among the high aristocracy, of whose fidelity he could be ill assured. To break faith with them was neither advisable nor practicable; and therefore his efforts were employed in husbanding his resources and ordering his revenues, that these sinews of war might not be wanting at need. The baron de Rosny, better known as the minister Sully, was created *sur-intendant* of finance. The old jobbers and administrators of the revenue ridiculed the idea of thrusting a soldier into such an office; but Sully soon convinced the monarch and the nation that probity, economy, and activity, were qualities more efficient in a financier than all the arts of fiscal experience. His first operation was to remit all arrears due on the *taille*; his next was to annul the leases for farming out the revenue, and to order all pensions or other allowances to be paid direct from the treasury, whence all payments were to be made, and not as heretofore from different funds and provinces. Great clamours of course were

raised against these innovations, so unfavourable to the grandees and to the provincial authorities. The proud duke of Epernon insulted Sully, who was not slow to touch his sword. "If Epernon challenges you," wrote Henri Quatre to his minister, "I will be your second."

The debts of the state were found to amount to upwards of 300 millions of livres, tantamount to nearly three times that sum in the present day, and this at the enormous interest of ten or twelve per cent. The revenue to liquidate this and support the charges of the state did not exceed 25 millions. Yet Sully in five or six years had cancelled this debt, and had begun to amass funds in anticipation of a future war. Not only was this effected, but in a very short time he relieved the people from the onerous tax of the *sous per livre* on all goods sold. Sully was eminently aristocratic; so much so, that he vehemently opposed the introduction of those manufactures which enriched the civic class at the expense of the landholders. Henry, however, over-ruled his minister in this, and founded the silk manufacture of the kingdom as well as that of tapestry. Yet Sully, though he despised the lower orders, did his utmost to alleviate their burdens. He diminished the *taille*, or tax, from which the nobles were exempt, and preferred the *dixme royal*, a kind of capitation tax, which was more equitably levied. The monarchy, in fact, never flourished under a more sage or more upright minister; and yet this administrative virtue of Sully gave a greater blow to the liberties of the French people than even the astute despotism of Richelieu. The economy of Sully rendered the states-general and even the notables useless; and all hopes vanished that the late troubles would terminate to the advantage of national freedom.

Who has not heard of the fair Gabrielle? Henry saw her first at the château of her father, during one of his campaigns, and became enamoured. He frequently stole from his camp in disguise, and crossed the enemy's lines to visit her. An hundred stories are told of the romantic adventures he underwent whilst wooing.

He won, and was happy. Never had illegitimate love a more flattering excuse. Compelled to espouse, when a boy, the abandoned sister of Charles IX., his wedding feast had been stained with the blood of his friend, and the dissolute Margaret led a life such as might be expected from such a race and such espousals. Henry consoled himself in the affections of Gabrielle d'Estrées, whose society he loved, and to whom he was constant. She had borne him several children. And now the wish of Henry was to obtain a divorce from his queen, and to sanction his connection with Gabrielle by a marriage. So serious and sincere was he in this that all his courtiers applauded the determination. Sully alone looked cold. Henry consulted him, and besought his advice; and the minister represented to him all the dangers of a disputed succession, of the pretensions of the young duke of Vendôme, who could not be legitimated, and of all the obvious objections to such a step. Henry was grieved: he saw the justice of the counsel, and remained irresolute. Gabrielle broke forth in invectives against Sully, and at length demanded his dismissal. Henry brought his minister by the hand into the apartment of Gabrielle, and entreated her to be reconciled to him. She persisted in her pride and in bursts of resentment. "Know, madam," said Henry, harsh for the first time, "that a minister like him must be dearer to me than even such a mistress as you." Gabrielle henceforth gave herself up to grief. The king was true and kind as ever. In the spring of the year 1599 she was advanced in a state of pregnancy. Henry, about to go through the pious ceremonies of Easter at Fontainebleau, felt it decorous to separate for a few days from his mistress. She retired to Paris, weighed down by despondency and the blackest presentiment. Astrological predictions were then the mode; and some imprudent or malevolent information of this kind tormented her: "We shall never meet again," were her words on parting from the king, and they proved true. She was taken with convulsions, delivered of a dead child, and expired in a few hours.

Henry had mounted on horseback at the first news, and was half way on the road to Paris, when he was told "it was too late." The brave Henry could not support this blow: he well nigh fainted, and was obliged to be conveyed back to Fontainebleau. There he retired, and shut himself up to indulge his grief. Sully alone was able to console him, and rouse him, after a time, to the affairs of the kingdom.*

It were to be wished, for Henry's character, that his amours had ended here. His intention was to marry; and the niece of the grand duke of Tuscany, Mary of Medicis, had already been mentioned. But the divorce had not yet been expedited by the pope; and the inflammable temperament of Henry took fire in the mean time with a new passion. Mademoiselle d'Antraigues was the object, a being lovely indeed, but wanting alike the modesty, the sweet temper, and unambitious conduct of Gabrielle. She long enticed and tormented the monarch. Her father, the count d'Antraigues, affected resentment and vigilance; and Henry — how the old love to live their youth o'er again! — had recourse to such disguise as he had formerly used to gain admission to Gabrielle d'Estrées. Henrietta d'Antraigues had not the same taste: she is said to have so disliked the monarch in the humble dress of a gardener that she turned him from her presence. At length she obtained from Henry a promise of marriage in case that a son was born to her within the year, and Mademoiselle d'Antraigues became marquise de Verneuil. Henry showed the contract to Sully, who, without other comment, tore and cast it under his feet. The king felt bound to write another; but in consequence of a stroke of lightning which fell on the house where the marquise resided it ultimately became void. The fright which the lightning occasioned had the effect of destroying the hopes she had entertained of fulfilling her part of the contract, a stipulation indecent and unworthy of the monarch. Henry

* The memory of Henry IV.'s mistress is preserved in the song of "Charmante Gabrielle," which her royal lover himself composed for her.

soon after was roused to a fuller sense of his dignity and of the nation's weal. A divorce was by this time obtained; and he espoused Mary of Medicis in the course of the year 1600. The king describes her in one of his letters to Sully as "terribly robust and healthy." She had some reason to be jealous, for the marquise de Verneuil still retained a share of influence. Sully was more than once called in to quiet their domestic broils. The birth of a son, afterwards Louis XIII., soon occurred to allay the fears of a disputed succession, and also contributed to bind Henry to his queen. The Spanish ambassador, a grave Castilian, was once ushered into the king's presence at Fontainebleau rather abruptly, and found the monarch running on all fours with the little dauphin on his back. "Are you a father?" was Henry's first salutation to the diplomatist.—"Yes, sire."—"Then I may finish my play;" and Henry took another scamper with his son around the apartment.

The chief obstacle to the security and happiness of the monarch lay in the intrigues of his grandees. The people gave him little trouble; the turbulence of the civic class was over: they were ashamed, as well as weary, of the long disorders of the league, and in no way sought to renew them. Satisfied by the mild and economical management of the revenue by Sully, they applauded so beneficent a power, and forgot, or regretted not, that it was absolute. None clamoured for the states-general; they made loyalty a part of their religion; and abandoned all doctrines of liberty and republicanism to the hated huguenots, who professed them.

The nobles, who were the contemporaries of Henry, could not find the same repose: they had lived a life of turbulence and war; they had been bred in intrigue, and in all the excitement of contending parties; peace could not content them. Then the life of a camp had placed them on a kind of equality with their monarch, who had terminated the war by yielding up the administering authority in the provinces to the several grandees. He had compounded with them, as much as

conquered them; and the protestant nobles had taken a position of equal independence with that of the catholics. The high aristocracy, in fact, that Francis I. so prudently kept down, had reconstituted itself in the subsequent reigns. They now made a covert, but not less serious proposal to Henry, choosing the duke of Montpensier, a stripling and a prince of the blood, to be their spokesman on the occasion. This demand was no less than to re-establish the old feudal system, by allowing the present governors of provinces to hold them in fief, and transmit them to their descendants. Henry was not a monarch to tolerate such a demand; and his angry reply struck young Montpensier with terror.

The grandees determined to win by union and force what gentler means could not obtain. They conspired, leagued with Spain, with the duke of Savoy, and even with England, endeavouring to excite a malcontent party. Protestants as well as catholics joined in this: the duke of Bouillon at the head of one, the proud Epernon representing the other. Such, however, was Henry's power, and such his character for courage as well as promptitude, such, too, was the vigilance of Sully, that this intrigue could never be matured into a conspiracy. Henry's frank and amiable temper won over many; and he never proceeded to punish the guilty until he had used every gentle means to admonish, to pardon, and recall them to duty.

The mareschal de Biron was almost the only one of his nobles who still persisted in treasonable views. The king, on one occasion, had summoned him, charged him seriously, but not severely, with the crime, and showed him that he was well informed of his intrigues. Biron fell on his knees, confessed his weakness, but vowed that he would never more forsake the path of loyalty. Henry pardoned and embraced him. But Biron, vain and fickle, jealous even of his monarch's fame, was weak enough to listen once more to the insinuations of Spain. The duke of Savoy, on a visit to Henry, manifested every sign of admiration for the king, while he occupied himself

in corrupting the French courtiers, and in fomenting a party. He was ably seconded by the Spanish count de Fuentes. Biron was fascinated by the mighty promises of these intriguers: he was to have Burgundy as an independent state. The constable Bourbon himself never received more magnificent promises. Nothing more displays the baseness and declension of Spain, than her recourse to such weak and dishonourable machinations. Henry soon after, wearied with the bad faith and subtle subterfuges of the duke of Savoy, made war on that prince. Biron was entrusted with the command, and in conducting it his treachery became manifest. One day, when Sully rode with him to view the siege of a fortress belonging to the duke, the former could perceive that the fire from the ramparts slackened, and was directed from them. Sully took the same ride alone on the following day, and was received with a heavy and well-directed cannonade. It afterwards appeared that the marshal had intended to entice the king into an ambuscade, where the fire of the enemy would have certainly proved fatal. The duke of Savoy, worsted by the arms of Henry, made his submission, and obtained peace. Biron continued his intrigues with Spain, in concert with the duke of Bouillon, with the count d'Auvergne, bastard of Charles IX., and probably with Epernon, and the whole body of the malcontent noblesse.

The king was perfectly aware of these intrigues. Biron was betrayed by his chief counsellor and instigator, a person named Lafin. Henry saw Biron once talking with Lafin, and warned him, saying, "I know that man; he will lead you into evil." But the marshal was deaf to advice. Henry did not at first place much credit in the revelations of Lafin, who accused Sully himself among others of the court. But the informer produced written documents, proofs of Biron's connection with Spain. Biron was summoned to court. It was the king's intention to reproach his ancient comrade, to endeavour to awaken his loyalty, shame him into a con-

fession of his treason, and again pardon him. Sully received instructions to pursue the same conduct, and to try every means short of letting the marshal know that Lafin had confessed all. Biron and the count d'Auvergne came to court boldly. Henry drew the traitor apart, led him into familiar conversation, showed himself open, frank, forgiving, yet suspicious. Biron betrayed no misgivings, no repentance, no wish to remove his sovereign's distrust. At last, as they arrived before an equestrian statue of Henry lately erected, which was ornamented with trophies, the king asked, "What would the king of Spain say were he to see me thus?" Biron, who felt that this was meant to try him, insolently replied, "Sire, he scarcely fears you." Then correcting himself, he stammered out, "I mean in that statue, not in this, your person." Henry smiled sorrowfully, and gave up his merciful and friendly purpose. Sully, on his side, exerted himself to the same effect, but in vain. Biron was hardened. It was only then that Henry gave orders for his arrest, and that of the count d'Auvergne. As they left the king's chamber, their swords were demanded. They were conveyed by water to the arsenal. Biron was tried before the parliament, condemned, and executed. He evinced the greatest rage on the scaffold: it amounted to frenzy, and was excited by his horror of so disgraceful a death. The executioner was obliged to hide his sword, and strike off the head of the culprit unawares.

The last years of Henry's reign are scarcely marked by any important incidents. The few that did take place, such as the conspiracy of the family d'Antraigues, and the weaknesses into which Henry's amorous disposition led him, are exaggerated in importance, and narrated by historians with a detail they little merit. The punishment of Biron, which Henry meant as a warning to his discontented nobles, succeeded in keeping them in awe. If they intrigued, it was in fear, and with a caution that marred all progress or purpose. The count d'Auvergne alone, though pardoned for being implicated with Biron,

renewed his schemes in conjunction with the marquise de Verneuil: this mistress treated the king with the capriciousness and severity which a wronged beauty might use towards a gallant more advanced in years: the monarch construed her caprice into infidelity; and a loving quarrel grew to be a serious misunderstanding. Henry withdrew the written document of the promise of marriage. The father and daughter, joined by the count d'Auvergne, plotted against the king, it was said against his life; and, as usual, they found support in a Spanish emissary. They were all three arrested, tried, and condemned to death; but Henry pardoned his mistress, as well as her relatives, and commuted their punishment into exile. The restless and false d'Auvergne was confined permanently in the Bastille.

Squabbles with his queen, Mary of Medicis, on account of her Italian favourites, Concini and his wife; distrust of Sully, excited by the envious courtiers; these, with national improvements, negotiations, festivals, and hunting parties, bring the reign of Henry IV. nearly to its close. In 1609, its happy and glorious monotony was varied by the enthusiastic admiration which the aged monarch conceived for mademoiselle de Montmorency, the young and lovely daughter of the constable, who had just appeared at court, and eclipsed all its beauties. There is some difference of opinion as to the nature of Henry's admiration: the memoir writers of the age saw scandal in every connection; and certainly Henry's past life and his known failings incline to the worst side. Bassompierre, then a young man, relates that he himself became a suitor for the beauty's hand, and that he was induced by the entreaties or commands of the enamoured king to desist. Bassompierre was a babbler, however, whose vanity breaks out in the arrogance of the mere pretension. The young prince of Condé was also smitten, but shrunk back from so formidable a rival as the monarch. What belies the account of Bassompierre is, that Henry came forward, and assured Condé, "that he might woo in all confidence, and that he had nothing

to fear on that score from his king." If Henry had licentious views, Bassompierre, and not Condé, would have been the convenient husband of mademoiselle de Montmorency.

Condé was the successful suitor, and the marriage was celebrated at court with unusual splendour. Henry, having given his word to the prince, indulged his predilection for the lovely bride by showering presents and favours upon her and her husband. The court, full of the malevolent, amongst whom the followers of the jealous queen were not the least forward, construed all these symptoms to be the homage of a guilty passion: they poured this in the prince's ear; and Condé, alarmed for his wife's honour, carried her off from the court by stealth, first to Picardy, whence, on receiving a summons from the king to return, he made a second flight, and gained the Low Countries. The king showed himself strangely affected by this incident: the discovery of Biron's conspiracy did not cause him more trouble. Sully was called up in the night; and the whole court was roused by the agitation of the monarch, who was pacing and stamping up and down the chamber of the queen, while the courtiers stood "pasted to the walls," says Sully, lest they should interrupt the monarch's passion. The flight of the first prince of the blood, and his taking refuge with the Spaniards, was certainly a grave question, love and jealousy being set aside. The king demanded Sully's advice, who hesitated, but being forced, advised him to "do nothing."—"Nothing!" said Henry, "call you that advice?" Sully replied, that the escape of the prince was a matter of little importance, unless the king chose to make it important by raising a clamour, and showing that he took an interest concerning it. Henry, however, was not in a humour to treat the matter thus slightly and thus wisely: he instructed his ambassador to demand of the archduke to deliver up the prince and princess of Condé; and, as Sully foresaw, the court of Brussels, in refusing, filled Europe with calumnies against Henry; asserting that he wanted

to take by force the wife of the first prince of the realm and of the blood. When Henry, immediately afterwards, menaced war, the outcry was that Europe was about to be deluged in blood for another Helen.

It was, indeed, unfortunate, that Henry, who had remained so many years at peace, no doubt preparing and amassing the materials and resources of war, and cautiously awaiting fit pretext and proper season, should now draw the sword for a cause at once criminal and absurd. To reduce the power of the house of Austria was part of an universal scheme, long meditated by Henry, and concerted by him with the politic Elizabeth. This scheme, which was to parcel Europe out into divers states, equal in extent and balanced in strength, to be afterwards held together by a general congress, or Amphictyonic council, existed more in the fancy than in the intentions of the French monarch. It had slumbered, but now started into life. He resolved to realise his dream: but this, which had been a vision of heroism and philanthropy, was now degraded and sullied by the immediate motive. Henry, who was passionately fond of glory, saw the stain that was to rob his achievements of their brightness and purity. The accusation of the Spaniards troubled him: perhaps there was even truth in the reproach, that the love of a sexagenarian king for a princess, and a married princess of twenty, was the only cause and pretext for convulsing Europe and shedding its best blood. This weighed upon Henry, and fretted him: his gaiety disappeared. Remorse and mortification came to cloud the heaven of his declining days. A dark presentiment, similar to that which had forewarned his loved Gabrielle of her fate, now gathered around Henry: he could not shake it off.

He intended leaving the queen as regent during his absence at the head of his army; and her previous coronation, a ceremony that had not yet taken place, was considered requisite. This detained him in the capital; and Mary of Medicis, fond of state and ceremony, insisted on it, and delighted in it. Henry was annoyed

and fretted: he frequently said he should never leave Paris alive, and he longed to contradict his presentiment. The coronation of the queen at length took place. On the following day, the 14th of May, 1610, he manifested strong feelings of despondency. Despatches brought him word that his enemies were making no preparations for defence, and that they gave out that the delivery of the prince and princess of Condé would at once allay his choler and arrest his schemes. This increased his ill humour: he called for Sully; but learning that his minister was ill at the arsenal, the king's coach was ordered to convey him thither. Seven of the suite occupied with the king his ample carriage. The duke of Epernon was in one corner, and Henry next to him. The vehicle proceeded, but was stopped in the narrow rue de la Ferronnerie by two loaded carts. This was the moment chosen by an assassin, Ravaillac, who, mounting on the step, and leaning full into the carriage, struck the king with a poniard, first in the stomach, and then in the breast. One of these stabs pierced the heart of the noble Henry.

To paint the rage and despair of the people would be impossible. The once detested Henry had won every heart; and the general grief for him partook of the character of madness. Tears were the least tokens of sorrow; many died on learning the catastrophe, amongst others the brave De Vic, the comrade of Henry. The lifeless body was borne to the Louvre, whilst Ravaillac, who made no attempt to escape, was taken, brandishing his dagger, and only preserved by the guards from being instantly torn in pieces. He had been a monk, strongly imbued with the king-killing principles that the jesuits had broached. His crime had been long meditated by him; but no proof exists that he had been instigated either by Spain or by any knot of malcontent courtiers. Suspicion, indeed, has scattered its stain on all with an unsparing hand. Epernon, the queen, Concini, and many others, were accused as being privy to the deed; and the record of Ravaillac's trial having been destroyed,

whilst these personages possessed the chief influence, gives some colour to the charge. But the tortured culprit might idly or malevolently cast imputation on the powerful, as indeed he menaced to do. For when some one pressed him to name his accomplices, Ravaillac answered, "Suppose I name you." The seed of his crime was the diabolical maxim to which the fanaticism of the league had given birth, and which it had rendered popular. It had germinated and grown in the dark solitude of a rancorous and fanatic spirit.

The character of Henry, if not altogether the most perfect, is certainly the most interesting that history presents. To enumerate his qualities were to repeat all that we admire in the perfection of the modern gentleman. Such was he, another Francis I., with more good fortune, more military talent, more humanity, more refinement, and with a career far more calculated than that of Francis to illustrate the heroic virtues. Then the interior and domestic life of Henry, made known to us in the simple and sublime memorials of Sully, makes us intimate with the man as with the monarch, and endears him to us as the warm friend, the devoted lover, the generous master, the frank and witty companion. His contemporaries, who gave him the epithet of the Great, must have admired, even more than they loved him. In our days, when the warlike feats of the past have been thrown so much into the shade, we are inclined to reverse those feelings, and to love more than to admire him.

Henry was no tyrant; but his reign had certainly a despotic tendency. He summoned no assembly of the states where the *tiers état* had a voice; but his position, much more than his nature, influenced him in that line of policy. He had suffered much from popular violence: he had had experience of the fury of the sixteen, and the fanaticism of the mob hired by the money of Spain. It is not to be expected, that from remote or theoretic views of the public good he should have awakened and given life to this hydra. Besides, even in the plenitude

of his power, he was harassed by the insubordination of the protestant towns and the assemblies of the reformers. The wish of all good men was for peace and order. The license of the past had thrown into disgrace the very name of liberty, whose lasting victories can be won only under the banners of moderation. To judge Henry or his age then with our ideas would be absurd; as to condemn him because the circumstances of his reign were unfavourable to the public liberties is unjust.

Aristocratic as Henry was in feeling, he was still less so than his minister Sully, many of whose prejudices in this respect he over-ruled. But the exclusive maxim of gentility nevertheless prevailed. The civic class trodden down in this reign were for nearly two centuries unable to rise. The cause of this depression may be traced to their want of union and firmness, and notwithstanding the majority of the capital adhered to catholicism: we must also take into account the blindness with which both parties, choosing princes for their leaders, allowed all public and general principle to be forgotten and lost in the private interests and views of those chiefs.

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